

THE EMPTY

Written by

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EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Deep in the heart of what would be a thriving city lay only deserted black roads. They border the countless skyscrapers while the amber streetlights make only shadows amongst them.

Not a single soul can be found.

This city is alone, EMPTY.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Two headlights appear in the distance as a car crests the hill.

CLOSER.

It slows to a stop. The drivers' door opens and a Man, 20's, wearing a nice suit, falls out and onto the ground, COUGHING as he does.

MAN: (V.O.)
(Almost a whisper) I am alone.

Man slowly stands up.

MAN: (V.O.)
Is this my revelation?

Deserting his car, he starts to walk.

MAN: (V.O.)
My reckoning?

He closes his eyes. Long breaths.

MAN: (V.O.)
My redemption?

He pats his pockets, feels his shoulders, runs his fingers through his hair.

MAN: (V.O.)
But have I lost everything?

He turns back to the car, he starts rummaging through it. His frustration grows as he begins rifling between the seats, emptying out the glove box, SLAMMING the doors; LOSING CONTROL.

He takes a long breath.

As he begins to take in his surroundings the silence and isolation creep up on him like a cool breeze.

MAN: (V.O.)
Bottled up inside me there rests a
monsoon, a wild fire, a mountain of
snow on the precipice of an
avalanche, waiting.

The city YAWNS IN IT'S DESOLATION before him.

His sense of unease grows. He searches for the cars, the
people... the life.

EXT. MOTORWAY - NIGHT

The massive four-laned roads stand oppressively still.
Silent.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

The tall columns of the hotel sidewalk, the tiled foyer, the
empty lobby.

EXT. SHOPS - NIGHT

The neon standby lights of the shopfronts flicker.

MAN:
while I slept, someone took from me
the reassurance of who I was and
replaced it with a terrible secret.

He peers into the windows cupping his hands to his eyes.

We move across the EMPTY GLASS.

The Man walks on; his pace quickens.

Faster. Faster. He starts to run through the lonely streets,
the many windows holding only his reflection.

He runs.

EXT. VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CITY - NIGHT

He runs down laneways, roads, across bridges. He runs and
runs. His breaths BURST from his mouth in quick successions,
his arms pump, and his legs hammer the ground.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

He stops outside a phonebooth. Its lights are on, the machine
looks in working order.

The Man approaches cautiously, still BREATHING HEAVY. He lifts the receiver. Nothing. *We seem him yell out but hear no scream.*

He SLAMS the phone down. Picks it up. SLAMS it again. Again and again, the pounding echoes into the night.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Man enters a well lit PARKING LOT, again, all but completely EMPTY.

Something at the other end of the lot catches his attention. He stops dead.

We PAN to the other side of the carpark and see-

A DINNER TABLE, decorated with all the necessities for an elegant meal. Table cloth, candles, salt, pepper, cutlery.

Sitting at the table is a woman, EARLY 20's, pretty, SUSANNA. Before her rests a dark chocolate cake decorated with birthday candles.

The Man slowly moves closer.

Susanna sits there. On the table she absentmindedly twirls a PLAIN GOLD RING.

Man nears the table, Susanna doesn't notice. He sits down.

They sit.

MAN:

Susanna?

Nothing.

MAN: (CONT'D)

Susanna? Where am I?

Her eyes SNAP onto his. She's still, silent, staring.

SUSANNA:

Do you remember?

She motions to the table, to the cake.

MAN:

Is this my last birthday?

SUSANNA:

Your last birthday.

MAN:

Where am I? We?

SUSANNA:
You have brought yourself here.

MAN:
You're not real. This can't be
real.

SUSANNA:
This is for-

MAN:
For what?

SUSANNA:
The mistakes you've made.

MAN:
Mistakes?

SUSANNA:
You pulled me into your darkness,
hoping I would pull you out. When
you looked deep into the shadows,
you became overcome with despair. I
could see there was no return from
that.

She gently places the ring on the table.

MAN:
Who are you?

SUSANNA:
This was our last memory not filled
with regret. (Beat.) But the truth
is: by this birthday I had already
outgrown what little love for me
you had...

The Man's discomfort starts to show.

SUSANNA: (CONT'D)
I could see you falling. What's
more, I could see you choosing to.
The answers to your life's
questions did not lie at the end of
the road you took. The easy way-

MAN:
Shut up!

His anger CUTS through the conversation like a guillotine.

SUSANNA:
Your anger...

MAN:
My anger?! My temper? ...Say it.

SUSANNA:

No. You've said enough. It wasn't your rage that separated us. It was your weakness-

He SLAMS the table. Suzanna doesn't flinch.

MAN:

You've said enough, you've DONE enough.

SUSANNA:

There is no changing this, me. The changes will be your changes.

The Man BOLTS up, picks up a GLASS and SMASHES it against the nearby wall.

He turns back to Susanna only to find the table, chairs, food, have all vanished.

Still breathing heavy, The Man stands there, helpless.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

He runs back to the car. He jumps in and tries to start it. Nothing. He SHAKES the steering wheel, about to LOSE CONTROL. He slows down. Defeat.

MAN: (V.O.)

The truth of all things had been lost to me. The patterns and symmetry all but gone.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

He walks along...

MAN: (V.O.)

What is nature without an eye to witness it? A song without an ear to listen? Daylight, laughter. These things have ceased to have meaning.

EXT. CLIFF-FACE - CONTINUOUS

The Man wonders to the cliff-face that runs alongside the city. The empty towers behind him.

MAN: (V.O.)

And yet to have to pretend.

He looks out into the night.

MAN: (V.O.)
For others.

He stands up on the ledge.

MAN: (V.O.)
What seems a simple step, an easy
choice; becomes a faithless leap.

He tries to ready himself for the leap.

MAN: (V.O.)
Into the boundless abyss.

Just as he is about to jump something FLITTERS in front of
him. A small CARD. He GRABS it mid-air. A PLAYING CARD; the
Jack of Spades.

He whirls around, looking for where it came from.

No one.

We move in closer between two buildings, a dark ALLEYWAY. s
SHADOW, sitting deep within, MOVES.

The Man, jumps down from the ledge.

MAN: (V.O.)
And now I have.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Man runs down the alleyway. It leads out onto-

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The empty street. He looks around. There in the distance
stands the SILHOUETTED FIGURE. It TURNS and DISAPPEARS down
the hill.

The Man chases.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

The Man has arrived in suburbia. These houses sit dark and
silent too.

His haste has been replaced by an uncertain curiosity. He
walks past an old, worn, house.

From deep within the belly of the empty house, a light
FLICKERS ON.

MAN: (V.O.)
I'm trapped in here while the
spectre of a distant memory taunts
me.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS

He walks quietly up the front staircase.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Along the front porch. The front door stands wide open.

MAN: (V.O.)
I have grown old here. My soul
carrying the burden of my...
weakness.

EXT. HALLYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Down the hallway, the dim light still alive from somewhere
deeper.

MAN: (V.O.)
Wanting to be swallowed by the
emptiness instead it played its own
cruel joke.

EXT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

An old coffee table, covered in forgotten pieces of someone's
life. A metronome, a set of keys, an old book. Tokens
resting untouched in the silence.

MAN: (V.O.)
I became what it was that I longed
to be encompassed by.

He stops. Hypnotised. The dim light flickering off his face.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Old withered hands caress a deck of worn, faded, playing
cards. Shuffling, dealing, each move gentle, executed with a
cool precision.

The poorly lit room is held in light by a small candle, an
old man, the FIGURE, sits at the table playing an ancient
unrecognizable card game.

MAN: (V.O.)
This is my revelation.

The cards are laid out before him in a LARGE CIRCLE. In the middle, lined up by suit, sit fifteen of the sixteen face cards.

The figure plays the FORGOTTEN GAME with a sullen, unmoving, unthinking repetitiveness.

The Man approaches the table.

The Figure slowly looks up. He holds him in a long stare.

MAN: (V.O.)
My redemption.

The Old Man stops. Slowly he stands, he pulls out from his jacket pocket an ENVELOPE. He places it gently on the table beside the cards. He buttons his jacket and moves toward The Man; who's standing still, rigid, frozen.

The Figure then turns and leaves.

The Man opens the envelope. He unfolds the letter. In an elegant cursive we see it is the source of THE NARRATION.

MAN: (V.O.)
My reckoning.

The Man notices the game. He reaches into his pocket and procures the Jack of Spades found earlier. He places it down in its respective position on the table.

MAN: (V.O.)
Now I am alone.

He sits down, rounds up the cards, and begins shuffling...

FADE TO BLACK.