

Dead Filter

Luke Hunter

Logline

A high-school vlogger is cursed with a phone filter that will kill her unless she sends it to kill her friends, one-by-one.

Synopsis

Maine Arkwright (17) is obsessed with becoming the next viral sensation, the problem is, she has no self-confidence and even less self-esteem. When she is anonymously gifted a social filter, she's desperate to show it off. But when her followers use the filter, a ghoulish woman, known as The Gaze, appears and tears out their soul. Now, if Maine doesn't find a new victim every 12 hours, then The Gaze will murder her! Maine must fight The Gaze and find out why she was cursed, but her fame-hungry friends have other plans for the filter.

Dead Filter is a ghost story for the tiktok generation, it combines modern themes of anxiety, social media addiction and cyber-bullying with the classic motifs of betrayal, teen-love and shock horror. One location (a suburban house), excellent character roles, small cast, low budget, a memorable monster, and obvious sequel potential.

Stream or Die

Characters

Maine Arkwright (17)

Our Hero, a determined, unappreciated vlogger, desperate to be liked by strangers on the internet. Maine is held back by the very fact she tries so hard. Full of envy for her popular classmates, she is glad to have the curse at first, but soon realizes what a horrible mistake she has made.

We sympathise with Maine's need for attention and the desperate loneliness that accompanies being a teenager in the digital age. Over the course of the film, she learns to be her own person and face up to her flaws. Emotionally naïve, socially anxious and a terrible overthinker, she is the perfect victim for the curse. She is relatable to teenagers who've grown up being forced idealised Instagram lives.

She compels us by her proactivity, her loyalty to her true friends, and her determination to fix her mistakes and take responsibility for what she's unleashed on the world.



Chloe (17)

Chloe is an alt-right, deep web, troll, with an incredibly toxic sense of humour. She's the poster-child for what can happen if someone falls down the wrong side of the internet. But she's compelling for her quick wit, no-bullshit attitude and ferocity in protecting Maine, who she has unrequited feelings for.

When she finds out about the curse, Chloe wants to use it to get karmic justice against the influencers. Her codependency issues with Maine put pressure on the group as they fight The Gaze, and her distrust of the other friends lead to rifts. For a girl who hates drama, she's certainly involved in a lot of it.



Lucas (18)

Lucas is a Zen, sober, eighteen year old, who seems wise beyond his years, but only because of his rough upbringing. His girlfriend is The Gaze's first victim, but he keeps this hidden from the group as he tries to discover the secrets of the curse.

Lucas is a compelling outsider, initially we see him as a traitor, his intrusion into the group creates friction, especially his romantic dynamic with Maine. But we soon root for him because of his loyalty, quick actions and large heart.



Del (20)

Maine's older brother, formerly a high-school jock, who has gone to a liberal college and sworn off all technology. He prefers to spend his time exploring the vast world of psychedelics, determined that the only world left to map is the inside of our own minds.

Del is a source of comic relief at times, pondering philosophical questions, non-sensical rants and possibly the answers that will unlock the mystery of the gaze. He's the Gen Z version of the horror stoner: sharper, more intellectual and post-modern.



Kori (18)

Kori is Del's girlfriend and a teenage influencer, with millions of Tiktok followers. Forced daily to upload videos to maintain the popularity she has come to crave, she feels her personality splitting in two, between her digital image and her actual self.

She is forced to pay some of the harshest tolls during The Gaze's attacks, as she is the one who craves attention the most. She struggles to integrate her online thot-personality with the down-to-earth, socially conscious girl she really is. To survive, she needs to learn to let go of her fame, but is that a life worth living?



The Gaze

Whenever the cursed filter is opened, a woman appears behind the user. When the camera is not on her, she teleports closer to her prey, when she touches them, they die.

The Gaze is a source of jump scares, spectral tension and general anxiety. At times she seems like an ever-present figure, ready to strike at any moment. Her face is grotesque, like a grenade has exploded in someone's mouth. As the film progresses, we find out exactly how The Gaze is connected to Maine and why she was cursed in the first place.



Outline

A **TV PERSONALITY** stares into the lens of a Morning Show camera, a fake smile plastered on her face, she pulls out a Colt 44, places it in her mouth and pulls the trigger – her brains hit the ceiling. The video is swiped away and replaced by **MAINE ARKWRIGHT**, 17, vlogging in her room. She tries to be a compelling, clickable idol, like all the other Instagram girls, but she just doesn't have "it". She is comforted by her best-friend, **CHLOE**, 17, a deep-web troll. Chloe convinces Maine to film a hate-filled rant about influencers; but this inadvertently completes an ancient ritual and Maine is cursed. She is sent a link to a '**filter**', that says it should be forwarded to anyone that 'wants attention'. Thinking it's a joke, Maine forwards it to a **Raving Influencer**.

The next morning, the Raving Influencer is found dead from an overdose; in her last online video, she used Maine's filter and a ghoulish woman appeared behind her: no face, just a shattered, gnarled mass of bone and cartilage – this is the **THE GAZE**. As soon as the camera moves off The Gaze, she teleports and attacks the influencer, who convulses and dies with blood pouring from her eyes. Maine gets a notification saying that she has 12 hours to send the filter again or The Gaze will come for her. Maine goes to the police but they think she's insane. However, she is believed by Chloe; **LUCAS** (18, a boy who saw the death), **DELEWARE** (20, Maine's brother) and **KORI** (18, Del's girlfriend).

The gang hole up in Maine's house and fight The Gaze. Maine discovers that as long as The Gaze is on camera, it can't move, but The Gaze has more tricks – it turns all the screens in the smart-house into front-facing cameras and teleports behind Maine to kill her, but Chloe quickly sends out the filter, saving Maine's life. Unfortunately, Chloe has accidentally sent it to Kori.

They hide Kori in a pitch-black bathroom, and summon The Gaze, but it can't get through the bathroom door and is stuck outside. Everyone starts to feel disturbed as The Gaze corrupts their minds, turning them against each other. Chloe discovers Lucas is the Raving Influencer's ex-boyfriend and wanted to get revenge on Maine, but Maine has already fallen for Lucas's charms.

As the night passes, Maine studies The Gaze and realises it is the TV personality who committed suicide at the start – this is Maine and Del's **MOTHER!** Maine seeks out their **GRANDMOTHER**, who has Alzheimer's, and eventually finds out the truth: her mother created The Gaze on purpose to stalk Maine. They discover that as long as someone is stalked by The Gaze, everyone will worship them – this is exactly what Maine yearned for at the start. The only way to stop The Gaze is to let it kill Kori and then send it to a victim who truly does not want to be worshipped – Del.

Before they can complete the plan, Chloe becomes fully corrupted by The Gaze and betrays them. She performs a new ritual, curses **herself** and sends The Gaze to kill Lucas, furious that Maine has picked him over her. The Gaze stalks Lucas through the house as Maine fights Chloe, trying to save him. Maine wins, but by the time she does, Lucas is already dead.

Maine decides to end the chain of the curse by sending it to herself. From the POV of a front-facing camera, we see Maine living her life with the curse, her phone is always streaming, 24-7. The Gaze is always visible, no matter what Maine is doing: eating, working, showering, watching TV – because The Gaze is stuck on camera, it can't kill Maine. She sleeps in her bed, with The Gaze looming behind her, like a watchful mother.

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