

IT GAZES BACK

By

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FADE IN:

INT. SIMON'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It is a dark and stormy night. Thunder RUMBLES outside.

A MALE FIGURE lies on the floor in the middle of the dark, cluttered, messy room.

BEN (V.O.)

It was Simon who first gave it a name. I told him not to - said that might look like an invitation, might make 'It' more real.

The figure's head lies in a POOL OF BLOOD.

A GUN rests nearby.

O.S., a door SLAMS and a distant MALE VOICE calls out --

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Simon? Simon!

The figure's eyes are glazed, lifeless.

BEN (V.O.)

Si never did listen to me.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A funeral. MOURNERS gaze down into an open grave as a PRIEST reads from a Bible.

BEN, early 30s, is among them.

INT. FUNCTION ROOM - DAY

The wake.

A handful of friends, Ben one of them, sit around a table. JAKE, early 30s, raises his glass.

JAKE

To Simon.

They murmur agreement, drink to his memory.

BEN (V.O.)
It's funny how big things always
seem to have small beginnings.

INT. SIMON'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The same living room as the opening, although this time the
lights are on and the room is tidy.

SIMON, 30s, watches TV.

BEN (V.O.)
Si was just another wannabe writer
in search of that one great idea. A
normal guy stuck in a job he didn't
want, looking for the story that'd
give him his big break.

A photo of an OLD LADY appears on the TV SCREEN.

BEN (V.O., CONTD.)
Then, late one night, on some
obscure channel, he found it.

Simon leans forward, eyes widening.

BEN (V.O., CONTD.)
Her name was Liana Ames.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Ben and Simon sit at a table.

SIMON
I'm telling you B, this is it!

BEN
Si, I don't mean to piss on your
parade, but it all sounds a bit...

SIMON
'A bit'...?

BEN
Well, a bit crazy.

SIMON
What?! Okay, so it might seem
far-fetched. But come on! This
woman claims for years that she's
being stalked by shadows --

BEN

Part of that 'crazy' I was talking about.

SIMON

(ignoring him)

-- then one day she's found dead in her apartment, and the doctors have no idea what the cause of death was? That's a genuine, bona-fide mystery, that is!

Ben leans back in his chair, arms folded.

BEN

Si, I admire I enthusiasm. I do. And yeah, it's an interesting tale. But 'stalked by shadows'? Seriously, that's ridiculous.

SIMON

Why is it so ridiculous? There's so much we don't know about how the universe works. Anything we call 'fact' is just a theory, anyway. We don't even know everything about our own planet! Look, scientists reckon we've discovered less than ten percent of the species that exist. So who's to say that there's not other stuff, paranormal stuff, out there, too?

He smiles, shrugs.

SIMON (CONTD.)

And anyway, even if does all turn out to be bollocks, it's still a good story.

He reaches for his coffee.

BEN (V.O.)

And that was how it started. Pretty soon Si was convinced that Liana Ames had been right, that there had been something stalking her.

(beat)

Did I believe any of it? I'm not sure. Maybe. Si always said that every single one of us had seen It at some point in our lives.

INT. BABY ROOM - NIGHT

A baby CRIES in the darkness.

BEN (V.O.)

You know how babies always seem to cry for no reason? Terrified when there's apparently nothing to be afraid of?

The door opens and a MOTHER steps in from the lit corridor.

MOTHER

Hey sweetie, what's wrong?

She crosses to the cot.

BEN (V.O.)

Simon said that's because they can see 'It'. As we get older, we just forget It's there. Or maybe we force ourselves to shut It out, re-tune our eyes not to notice It. I don't know.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

A WOMAN, 20s, makes her way along the footpath.

BEN (V.O.)

But every now and then, when it's dark and we're on our own, for no real reason at all we feel edgy, threatened.

The woman stops, turns her head and stares into the darkness of the treeline.

She scans it for a second, then shakes herself and moves on.

BEN (V.O., CONTD.)

That's Him. He's there, just watching, waiting.

In the darkness beneath the trees...is there a SHAPE there? It's impossible to tell.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Simon sits, studying a book.

BEN (V.O.)

Slowly, it became all Simon could think about. And no matter how hard he searched, all he could find were more questions, more mysteries. It cost him everything...

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Simon's BOSS delivers the bad news.

BEN (V.O.)

...his job...

Simon looks dismayed.

INT. FRONT HALL - ANOTHER NIGHT

Simon and his WIFE argue furiously.

BEN (V.O.)

...his marriage...

She leaves, slamming the door. Simon just stares after her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Simon sits in a chair, studying a book. Piles of books and newspapers fill the floor around him.

BEN (V.O.)

...until eventually, his obsession was all he had. Just him and his theories, gazing into the abyss. And like Nietzsche said, you gaze into the abyss too long...

As Simon continues working, the image FADES to --

A BLACK SCREEN

BEN (V.O.)

...eventually it's gonna gaze back.

FADE IN:

INT. SIMON'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark, cluttered, messy. A STORM rages outside. Simon paces the floor, a PHONE in his hand.

BEN (V.O.)

Si called me right before he died.

Simon's voice is tight, fearful.

SIMON

(into phone)

He's coming for me, B. I know it.

INT. BEN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ben is on the other end of the phone.

BEN

(into phone)

Si, just calm down, okay? No-one's coming for you. All of this is just in your head!

INTERCUT between them.

SIMON

(into phone)

Yeah? The same way it was all in Liana Ames' head? Or Danny Hayes'? Or any of the other cases I've told you about? It took them, Ben, and now It wants to take me, too. Well you know what? I'm not gonna let It. I've let It take too much from me already.

BEN

(into phone)

I'm coming over, okay? Just sit tight 'til I get there.

Simon sets his jaw determinedly.

SIMON

(into phone)

I'm done living in fear of this thing. It's time to fight back.

BEN (O.S.)
(from phone)
Just promise me you won't --

SIMON
So long, Ben.

He takes the phone from his ear.

BEN (O.S.)
(from phone)
Si, wait --

Simon hangs up, lowers the phone.

INT. BEN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ben looks at the phone in his hand.

BEN
Shit.

INT. SIMON'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Simon stands in the middle of the room.

A RUMBLE of thunder outside.

Simon smiles. He speaks into the darkness, his voice now utterly calm.

SIMON
I know you're here. I can feel it.

No reply.

SIMON (CONTD.)
Aww, come on, don't me shy. It's
just you and me now, mate. How
'bout you finally talk to me?

Nothing.

SIMON (CONTD.)
Fair enough. Let's cut the
pleasantries, then.

He spins round, a GUN raised in front of him.

He scans the darkness.

SIMON (CONTD.)
 No? Still nothing? I'll do it, you know. Let's see how fucking omnipresent you are with a few bullets in you, shall we?

His voice wavers, cracks.

SIMON (CONTD.)
 Why won't you say something? Is that all you do? Just stand and watch? I've lost everything trying to drag you out of the shadows, and you don't even care.

(beat)
 Stop staring at me!

And still there is no reply.

All of Simon's bravado is gone now.

SIMON (CONTD.)
 Look, I'll do you a deal, okay? Just...leave me alone. Melt back into the shadows and I promise, I swear, that I'll burn everything I've collected on you. I won't speak about you to anybody, ever again. I'll forget you exist, as long as you just disappear. Okay? Do we have a deal?

A RUMBLE of thunder. A tear rolls down Simon's cheek.

SIMON (CONTD.)
 Why me? I didn't want this. I didn't want to find you. All I wanted was an idea. Just one, half-decent idea. It's not fair.

(beat)
 Do something.
 (beat, a plea)
 DO SOMETHING!

Nothing but terrible silence. Simon smiles.

SIMON (CONTD.)
 You don't wanna do something?
 (beat)
 Fine. Then I will.

CUT TO BLACK

A single SHOT rings out.

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ben lies on his back in bed, staring up at the ceiling.

BEN (V.O.)

Si thought It was after him, that
he'd angered It and It wanted
revenge. But I disagree.

(beat)

Sure, it must be scary seeing It.
And if you can't block that out, if
you always feel It watching you -
then yeah, I can see how that might
drive someone crazy. But as for It
being dangerous? Or getting angry?
Nah, that's not Its style.

Ben rolls over onto his side, shuts his eyes.

BEN (V.O., CONTD.)

It's patient. It'll wait. It'll
wait because It knows It'll win in
the end. It knows the inescapable
truth: that no matter how long it
takes, no matter if you live 'til
you're nine or 'til you're
ninety...

The rest of the room is quiet, empty darkness --

-- except for SOMETHING at the far wall.

BEN (V.O., CONTD.)

...one day, the Shadowhaunter will
come for you, too.

A pair of EYES stare out of the darkness.

Cold.

Unblinking.

Seeing all.

FADE OUT