

No Recollection

by

PH Cook

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Early dawn. Not much daylight manage to invade the room through the cracks in the blinds.

JENN (32), make-up smudged, hair tussled, sleeps in the bed next to ROBERT (35). A handsome face on top a lean body. His mind as cunning as a starving fox.

Jenn sleeps on her side. Her back to Robert. Hands close to her face. A wedding band on her left ring finger.

Her eyes pop open. Suddenly wide awake.

Confused, her eyes dart back and forth. Takes in the surroundings.

Slow, quiet, she turns to see the outline of Robert's body.

Alarmed, she slides out of bed. She feels around the floor for her clothes and shoes, gets dressed, then picks up her purse.

Quiet as a mouse, she heads out into the --

HALLWAY

It's still on the dark side, but lighter than the bedroom. Jenn tiptoes down the hallway to the --

FOYER

She reaches for the doorknob. Careful not to make any noise, she opens the door, steps out.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

On the front porch, Jenn scans the area. It's all new to her.

Nothing but fields and woods as far as the eye can see.

She furrows her brow, thinks hard, then digs her phone out of her purse. While it powers on, she steps down from the porch, starts down the dirt road that leads to the house.

Jenn glances back at the house. Still quiet.

She checks her phone, taps the map icon.

On the screen, a map appears with a marker at her current location. There are no roads or towns nearby.

She zooms out. Still nothing nearby. Zooms out some more.

In disbelief, she stares at the screen, then checks it against her surroundings.

The house sits dark, uninviting, in the background.

Jenn checks the phone's screen again. The shortest way to the nearest town is through the woods.

One last glance at the house. She makes up her mind, starts off to the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Jenn treks through the woods. Every now and then, she checks her phone to make sure she's on the right track.

Birds squawk as if startled by something.

Jenn glances all around her. Sees nothing, but in the distance, a man's voice yells out.

ROBERT (O.S.)

Jenn! Jenn!

Jenn stops dead in her tracks. She looks behind her, but Robert is far behind.

Wary she makes up her mind, picks up a run.

She runs through some rough terrain. Rocky areas mixed with thick underbrush.

Robert's still far behind her, but getting closer.

ROBERT (O.S.)

Jenn! Wait!

Jenn picks up her speed. Slides down a sharp drop. Nicks her thigh on a sharp rock. Blood oozes out.

JENN

Fuck.

She continues on at a fast clip. Over fallen trees. Across small creeks.

One foot lands in a hole. She goes down hard.

She checks her ankle. Nothing broken, but it hurts. She scrambles to her feet, starts off in a jog with a limp.

Annoyed, she stops to listen. Sharp eyes scans the area all around. Everything's still. No birds. No Robert.

She limps towards a large fallen tree, hides behind it.

Out of breath, in pain, she sits down. All quiet.

After a long moment with only silence, she checks her phone's map. She's on track.

She pushes buttons on the screen, puts the phone to her ear.

A dial tone is heard, then --

PETER (V.O.)

(on phone)

You have reached Peter Naprawa.
Leave a message and I will call you
back as soon as I can. Thanks.

Jenn waits for the BEEP.

JENN

Peter, I'm not sure what has
happened, but I'm okay and I'm on
my way home... I love you.

She ends the call, sits quiet. Thinks hard about the situation. She closes her eyes, tries to remember.

Suddenly, Robert's face pops down from above only inches away from her face. He's perched on top of the fallen tree.

ROBERT

Jenn.

Startled, Jenn lets out a yelp. With her eyes wide she stares at Robert.

He jumps down from the tree, sits down in front of her.

ROBERT

Why were you running?

Awkward and nervous, Jenn searches for a good answer.

JENN

I had to go home. Didn't want to
wake you.

Robert grins. A fox toying with a frightened rabbit.

ROBERT
You were running away from me.

JENN
No. No, I wasn't.

His grin widens further.

ROBERT
Yes, you were.

JENN
No. I have to be somewhere later
today. I have to hurry home and
freshen up.

Robert jumps to his feet, extends his hand to her.

ROBERT
C'mon. I'll drive you home. It'll
be midnight before you get home
through these woods.

Jenn hesitates, then takes his hand. He pulls her up. Notices
the bloody nick on her thigh. With a naughty twinkle in his
eye --

ROBERT
Last night was wild, but that's
fresh. You didn't get it then.

Not sure what to make of that remark, Jenn stumbles forward.
Robert puts his arm around her for support.

ROBERT
Put your weight on me. I'll have
you back at your house in no time.

Together they trail back to where they came from.

LATER

Back at the same drop where Jenn slid down and hurt her
thigh, they ascend by moving sideways. One step at the time.
Robert's arm still around her.

Jenn's foot slides down on a bunch of leaves. She drops a
good five feet, dragging Robert with her.

ROBERT
You okay?

JENN
Yes. I'm fine.

Robert helps her up again. They continue the climb.

With brow furrowed, Jenn's face is troubled.

JENN
Last night...

Robert grins.

ROBERT
Was great. Fantastic even.
Everything I hoped it would be.

Jenn's even more troubled by this.

ROBERT
It was invigorating. Makes me want
to do it again. Don't you?

Jenn doesn't answer. They continue the climb.

They reach the top. Take a quick break. Catch their breaths.

Robert studies her. Takes her whole being in.

ROBERT
You remind me of a cat I used to
have. It was feral when I took it
in, but over time it became
domesticated like any other cat.
Until one day, it slipped out
through a window and disappeared.

Jenn stares at him. Has no idea where he's going with this.

ROBERT
She was gone for eight days. When
she finally came back, she looked
like shit. Like she's been through
hell and back. Her coat dull and
matted. She'd lost a lot of weight.
Had cuts all over. She acted like
her old domesticated self. Was all
friendly and shit. But her eyes...
looking into those eyes, you could
see the feral cat she really was
deep inside.

Robert pins her with his gaze.

ROBERT

She never left the house again, but that look in her eyes stayed until she died of old age. I have no idea what she did that time she ran away, but I know for sure, she was up to no good.

Incredulous, Jenn fails to see the connection to herself.

Robert grins, puts his arm around her again.

ROBERT

C'mon. Let's go.

They continue their trek back.

In an area dense with underbrush, a thorny branch catches Robert's shirt sleeve on the arm he holds around Jenn.

The sleeve is pulled up to his elbow.

Jenn looks down at his arm. It's covered in blood. Not new blood. Old dried up and crusty blood.

Alarm washes over her. Robert did not notice.

The branch lets go of the sleeve. It slides back down. Covers up the blood stained skin.

Jenn thinks hard. What to do. What to do. Decides to buy time until she has formed a plan.

JENN

I don't see how I remind you of this cat of yours.

He glances at her, flashes that fox like grin again.

ROBERT

You don't? There you were, all domesticated and proper, then last night, something snapped and you turned into this feral animal. A feral animal that I bet you've always been deep down.

Jenn doesn't like this. She stops, tries to look innocent.

JENN

I have to go behind the bushes.

Robert muses.

ROBERT
That's funny. You're gonna be shy
all of a sudden?

Jenn crosses her arms over her chest. Covers herself. She produces an embarrassed smile.

JENN
I'll be right back.

She hobbles away with an exaggerated limp.

Robert sits down on a rock to wait.

Jenn disappears behind some bushes. Once out of sight, her limp just about disappears. She picks up a sprint, runs as fast as she can away from Robert.

Robert grows restless, gazes into the area Jenn went.

ROBERT
You alright back there?

Jenn crashes through the woods like chased prey.

ROBERT
Jenn?

He gets up, tries to see past the underbrush.

ROBERT
Jenn!

A sinister seriousness creeps across his face. He takes off after her at a jog.

ROBERT
Jenn!

No answer. He picks up his pace. Hollers after her.

ROBERT
Jenn!!!

Jenn powers on. She can hear him yell in the distance.

She makes a sharp turn to the left. Finds a large tree to hide behind. She stays motionless, quiet for awhile.

Robert's footsteps are heard as he runs straight past.

Jenn peers out from behind the tree, sees Robert continue off in the wrong direction. She watches him go. She dares a sigh of relief.

Jenn takes out her cell phone, gazes after Robert, but he's gone. She dials a number on her phone.

A dial tone, then --

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
911, what's your emergency?

With her eyes still pinned on Robert's path --

JENN
I need help. Someone is chasing me.
I think he might have hurt someone.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Are you safe?

JENN
Yes. I think so.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
What's your location?

JENN
I don't know. Somewhere in the
woods between Jasper and Baxley.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Why do you think he might have hurt
someone?

Jenn scans the area for Robert, but he's nowhere in sight.

JENN
He's covered in blood and he's
chasing me. That's why.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Okay, I see your location.

JENN
Can you send someone fast?

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Yes, ma'am. There will be a canine
team coming and there's a
helicopter nearby. Try to reach an
open area if you can and when you
here the helicopter, stay where you
are and wave your hands, so they
know it's you.

A branch snaps somewhere near.

Jenn, freezes.

Startled, Jenn jumps as Robert's hand reaches around her from behind, grabs the phone in her hand. He ends the call.

ROBERT

Calling 911? Why? I'd never hurt you.

JENN

How did you get that blood on you?

Robert grins.

ROBERT

You mean this?

He pulls up his shirt. His whole stomach and chest is covered in crusted dry blood.

Jenn stares at him in horror.

JENN

Where did that come from?

Robert tilts his head, cocks his brow. Really?

The sound of a helicopter approaching from far away is heard. They both look up at the sky.

Jenn thinks fast. Lunges at him head first, pushes him down to the ground, then takes off.

Robert bounces back up, sets off in hot pursuit.

The helicopter is heard circling somewhere nearby.

Jenn takes a quick glance up at the sky, picks up her pace.

Robert's footfalls are heard behind her.

Her foot steps in an indentation. Her ankle twists. She falls on her face, but scrambles back up.

Robert gains on her.

Jenn runs at her maximum speed with a limp. Her face a grimace of pain.

Robert is close behind. His breath raw, filled with excitement of the hunt.

Jenn comes to a small clearing, trips on a small branch.

She lands hard right next to a 5' x 3' area covered in dirt. Fresh dirt...

Robert slows to a stop next to her, takes a moment to catch his breath. He grins wide, then chuckles.

ROBERT
How fucking ironic.

Jenn stares at him. Again has no clue what he means.

JENN
Why are you chasing me?

ROBERT
I'm not. I'm trying to help you.

Jenn's confused.

JENN
I don't need your help.

ROBERT
Of course you do.

Jenn sits up. Wary eyes focused on Robert.

JENN
No, I don't.

Robert kneels down, pats the fresh dirt down with his hands.

Confused, she watches him.

Robert turns to Jenn.

ROBERT
Be honest with me. You loved what we did last night, didn't you? I understand if you don't want to admit it. I get it. Not something you tell your friends about.

Robert grins. Charm mixed with insanity.

Jenn's more confused than ever. Robert notices.

ROBERT
Seriously, you don't remember?

Jenn shakes her head no.

ROBERT
Rosie's?

Alarmed, she shakes her head no again.

ROBERT
Remember we had drinks?

The helicopter is closer, but still not close enough.

Desperate, Jenn searches the sky for it.

ROBERT
You had a lot of drinks. In fact,
I've never seen a woman drink that
much before.

Shame washes over her.

ROBERT
I asked you why you drank so much.
That's when you started telling me
about your husband.

Jenn stares at him, embarrassed and horrified.

JENN
Why would I tell you about my
husband? I don't know you.

ROBERT
You told me how he's cheating on
you. How he beats you...

Jenn gasps.

JENN
I don't believe you!

Robert looks over his shoulder as if someone might overhear.

ROBERT
C'mon. You told me you wanted to
kill him. You practically begged me
to help you.

JENN
You're crazy. What are you trying
to do? Play some fucking game with
me?

The helicopter circles nearby. Closer, but not yet above them. In the distance, dogs bark and men's voices are heard.

ROBERT
No. No game. I'm just telling you
the truth. You killed him.

JENN

I know you're lying. I called him earlier.

Robert watches her, sees something on her shirt.

ROBERT

What's that on your shirt?

Jenn looks down at her shirt. There are some darker stains on it. She tries to rub them off. Doesn't work.

She grows alarmed, rubs harder. She pulls her shirt up. Underneath, she's covered in dried blood.

Her eyes widen. Her whole body trembles.

Robert looks on with a, I told you so, expression.

JENN

I did not kill my husband.

She gets to her feet, eyes still on her bloody stomach.

JENN

I did not kill my husband.

She pulls up her shirt sleeves. Blood covers both her arms.

JENN

I did not --

Robert hands her her phone.

ROBERT

Give him a call. Only way to be sure. Right?

With shaky hands, she takes the phone, pushes buttons, then holds the phone to her ear.

After a moment, a faint ringtone is heard.

Jenn tries to locate the sound.

A wide sinister grin spreads across Robert's lips.

Jenn finds where the ringtone comes from.

From the newly dug grave...

Robert bursts out laughing as the helicopter circles above. Police dogs close in.