THE STALKING LIGHT

by

Rainy Knight
OVER BLACK:

Heavy rain chatters. The creak of a door opening, and the patter of rain gets louder. Followed by squishy footsteps.

FADE IN:

INT. HARRY’S BAR - NIGHT

Lights flicker. Two women and a man enter a near-empty establishment.

Shoes soaked. Umbrellas down. Room lights stop flickering.

WADE (O.S.)
Let there be light. Thank you,
Lord Jesus my Savior.

Enter, DEE, late 20s, long raven hair, thin build, pretty face. Closes her umbrella.

DEE
Jeez, what a night.

MARCEL, mid-20s, dark-skinned, handsome, and built like a football running back, shakes rain off his Trench coat.

MARCEL
Can’t believe he called us out
in this weather.

DEE
Yeah, Sean of all people.

Followed by BETH, mid-20s, short brown hair, knockout looks. She eases out of her leather coat to reveal a buxom body. Expensive necklace. Bracelet, too.

BETH
Something’s wrong.

WADE (O.S.)
It’s the end of the world.

All eyes swing to WADE, 60s, rotund and stuffed in a disheveled suit. He sits facing the window, staring out.

On his table are two whiskey bottles.

WADE (O.S.)
There’s that light again.

Wade lifts a glass of Jack Daniel’s and drinks.
Marcel turns to the girls. Frowns. The trio of 20-somethings look around the empty bar. They take a seat at a table.

BETH
Where is everybody?

DEE
At home. Where we should be.

WADE (O.S.)
Ain’t seen a soul all night.
Hallelujah, it’s an open bar.

Front door swings open. In steps SEAN, early 30s. Long, lanky frame, and wearing a brooding expression.

Rain drips from his heavy coat. Puddles the floor. He looks at Wade. Then turns to his friends. Strides to their table.

MARCEL
Well, well, the rain man cometh.

Marcel and Sean bump fists.

Beth smiles at Sean. Gets up and is about to hug him. But he shakes his head, gestures for her to remain seated.

Beth’s smile fades. Anger brewing.

Sean pulls a chair and sits. Shakes water from his head like a dog. Looks at everybody. His face expressionless.

BETH
Well?

SEAN
Well what?

BETH
Does the word girlfriend ring any heart bells?

Beth trades a puzzled look with Dee. Marcel shakes his head.

BETH (CONT’D)
I go to your place, you’re not there. I leave you messages, you don’t call back. You want to break up, then do it like it means something.
SEAN
I don’t want to break up. It’s not what you think.

BETH
Then what?

MARCEL
Bro, if you’re in trouble, we’re here for you. Just say the word.

SEAN
The word? Okay, the magic word tonight is truth. Before we leave this place, we’re gonna get to a certain truth.

DEE
But why here?

SEAN
Relax. We’re also going to celebrate my birthday.

BETH
Your birthday is next month.

SEAN
So indulge me. Wanna hear my birthday wish? I’d like to play a little game?

MARCEL
You’re kidding.

SEAN
I’m serious.

BETH
This is so not like you.

DEE
What kind of game?

INT. BAR - LATER

They huddle around the table. In the middle of the table is an empty beer bottle, resting on its side.
SEAN
Truth or Dare. One round.
That’s all I’m asking. Then we’re gone. Promise.

DEE
One round?

SEAN
One and done. Everybody takes a turn.

The others nod in reluctance.

Sean spins the beer bottle. It goes round and round. Then stops, pointing at him. He smiles.

SEAN
Beth, truth or dare?

BETH
Truth, I guess.

SEAN
Then truth it is. Is it true you cheated on me? Slept with my good buddy Marcel?

MARCEL
Whoa. What the fuck, Sean?

SEAN
Shut up, Marcel.

Beth freezes. Bounces a glance off Marcel.

SEAN
What do you say, girlfriend?

BETH
Once.

SEAN
Once? Ooh, I’m thinking a little more than once. Right?

BETH
Yes. More than once. But it’s over. Swear it.

Sean turns to Marcel.

SEAN
Wanna add anything, Bro?
MARCEL
Sean, it was one of those things. I can’t explain it, it just happened. I’m sorry. But like Beth said, it’s over.

SEAN
It just happened, over and over. You know what, I accept your apology. It’s all good.

Sean extends a hand. Marcel hesitates, then they shake on it.

Dee turns to Beth.

DEE
Holy crap. We’re best friends and you never said a word.

BETH
I got my reasons.

SEAN
The unbearable truth isn’t always sweet. Beth, your turn.

Beth looks Dee in the eye.

BETH
Truth or dare?

DEE
... dare.

BETH
I dare you to empty your purse on the table.

Dee glares at Beth. Looks at the men.

DEE
Seriously?

SEAN
Empty your purse.

Dee balks, then flips her purse over. The contents spill out on to the table.

Beth reaches over and sorts through the items. She pulls out a gold bracelet. Holds it up to Dee’s face.

BETH
You’re busted, bitch.
Dee stands.

DEE
This is a frickin-ass setup?

MARCEL
You took her bracelet?

DEE
Yeah, I took it. Like a month ago... but I never had it in my purse. She set me up.

SEAN
Tell her why you took it.

DEE
Because she deserved it.

Those words have Beth on her feet. In Dee’s face.

BETH
How did I deserve you stealing my three-thousand dollar bracelet?

DEE
You Kardashian-wannabes are always flaunting your shit. Cars, jewelry – boyfriends. Use, abuse, replace. Like everything’s a bloody tampon.

BETH
Well, you’re a bloody thief.

SEAN
How did you know it was in her purse? Did you set her up?

BETH
No I didn’t. I just... knew.

DEE
You should thank me. I gave you an excuse to go shopping. Again.

SEAN
Did you replace the bracelet?

BETH
Well, yeah.
SEAN
Is it the one you’re wearing?

Beth looks at her wrist and stares.

BETH
Well, yeah it is.

SEAN
All good. Now Dee, apologize to Beth. You were wrong.

Dee keeps her eyes cast downward.

DEE
Sorry. I was gonna return it. No, really. I’m sorry, Beth.

SEAN
Accept her apologies, Beth.

Beth looks at the $3K bracelet. Offers it to Dee.

DEE
Here, take it. Shit. You weren’t all wrong.

SEAN
Thank you, ladies. Believe me, this is small potatoes compared to what’s coming.

The ladies hug. A little bit of tears flow.

WADE (O.S.)
There’s the light again. Sure as rain it’s the Apocalypse.

MARCEL
What are you talking about, old man?

WADE
The bright light coming this way. It’s almost here.

MARCEL
Give it a rest before I kick a hole where the light don’t shine.

Dee cracks up. Beth chuckles. Sean stares intensely at Wade.
SEAN
Please. Let’s finish the game.
Dee, you’re up.

With a grin, Dee stares at Sean.

DEE
Fine. Sean, truth or dare?

SEAN
Truth.

DEE
What’s going on? Really. This bar? You disappearing on us?
You and Beth? It’s so weird.

A sullen look on Sean’s face. He opens his coat and pulls a SNUB-NOSED .38 from his waistband. Sets the gun on the table.

Everybody’s expression goes serious. The others look at the gun. Then at Sean, and back to the gun.

SEAN
The old guy’s right. Death is coming and it’s not stopping.

MARCEL
Sean... you’re scarin’ me.

SEAN
This gun tells a certain truth. Shoot it and it changes things. Just like that. But, it takes a human to set it in motion. Like driving a car.

BETH
You want to... shoot somebody?

SEAN
I’ve had this gun for a long time. I thought tonight, it’s time to set it in motion.

Sean reaches for his revolver. Spins the cylinder. The gun trembles in his hands.

SEAN
Marcel, truth or dare?

MARCEL
Maybe we should —
SEAN
Truth or dare?

The gun points in Marcel’s direction.

MARCEL
(after a beat)
Dare.

SEAN
I dare you to go over to that old codger and bring him to our table.

Marcel stares at Sean. He spins his eyes to Wade. Marcel stands and walks over. Stop at the old guy’s table.

MARCEL
Hey, chief, sorry for what I said earlier. No hard feelings. Me and my friends thought maybe you wanna join us. Beats sitting all alone.

Wade holds his glass of whiskey as if considering the invitation. Tosses back the drink.

The old man pushes back his chair and stands. A little unsteady. He looks at Marcel, then over at the others.

WADE
Yeah, I’m game.

Wade picks up his bottle and glass. He follows Marcel.

SEAN
Pull him a chair, Marcel.

Marcel pulls an extra chair and Wades sits.

SEAN
I’m Sean. You met Marcel. The ladies are Beth and Dee.

WADE
Nice to meet ya.

SEAN
We’re celebrating my thirtieth birthday, which is next month. So, Wade, how old are you?

WADE
Sixty nine, I recollect.
Sean points the gun at Wade. Wade sees the gun and shakes.

WADE
Did I say something wrong?

Marcel, Beth and Dee look at each other.

SEAN
Let’s you and I play a little
game of truth and dare.

The hammer of the gun cocks. Anguish on Wade’s face.

SEAN
I want you to describe this
Armageddon thing to us.

WADE
It’s a big light. Coming fast.
Blinding. Death — God, don’t
kill me. Please, don’t...

SEAN
Stand up and walk over to the
window. Tell me the truth.

Wade stands and holds up his hands. Stumbles over to the
window. Sean trains his .38 on Wade’s head.

BETH
Sean?

Everybody follows. Bar lights go out. Semi-dark now.

MARCEL
Let it go, Sean.

SEAN
(to Wade)
What do you see, one light or
two lights? The truth, Wade.

WADE
Two.

SEAN
Those are car lights. Right?

Wade looks hard at Sean. He nods.

SEAN
Then you owe me and my friends
an apology. You crossed the
line. That night. Remember?
WADE
I remember. I’m so, so sorry.
I didn’t mean it. It was
raining and I couldn’t see.

SEAN
Bullshit. It wasn’t the rain.
You know that. Say it.

WADE
It wasn’t the rain.

SEAN
So what was it?

WADE
It was... it was the drink.

SEAN
You forced us off the road.
Comprende? But you didn’t even
stop. Didn’t call for help.

WADE
I panicked.

Sean puts the gun in his mouth. BANG. Everybody gasps. Wade
covers his head. Mumbling. After a few seconds, he looks up.

Sean smiles. Blood from his mouth.

Then, blood drips from Marcel’s nose. A gash appears on
Beth’s head. Blood covers her face. Dee’s eyes roll back in
her head. She collapses.

SEAN
My friends died at the scene.
I survived, for as long as
could take it.

Wade weeps. Sean leans down and hands him the gun. Wade takes
it. A light coming from the window. Shining BRIGHT on Wade.

SEAN
In the end, I did the right
thing. Your turn. I dare you.

Wade puts the .38 in his mouth – BANG.

FADE OUT.