

THE HITCHHIKERS

by

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A wide, establishing shot of the road, with a person standing in the center. The wind blows. Some individual shots of surrounding scenery, perhaps a single tree, or a sign. The world is grey, and foggy (preferably). On the side of the road, JACK, 18 and looking a bit weary, stands with a protein bar in his hand. Closeup of his mouth biting down onto the bar and chewing slowly.

The hand that holds the bar is slightly bloody.

He looks down. In the grass, about six feet from him, a body lies face down. He gazes at it for a second, still chewing, uninterested.

He drops the bar, still half uneaten, and it hits the ground near the body.

Now he sticks his thumb out. A couple of cars whiz by.

One eventually slows down, and comes to a stop right next to him.

The window rolls down.

THE DRIVER
You need a ride somewhere?

Jack looks at him.

THE DRIVER (CONT'D)
Hello? You alright?

He nods. He walks to the back of car and gets in.

THE DRIVER (CONT'D)
I'm headed into Kensington. Does that work for you?

He nods again, visible through the rearview mirror of the car.

THE DRIVER (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Jesus.

The car slowly sputters to life, and drives off. PAN DOWN to reveal the body in better detail. There's blood near the grass.

Slowly, as the sound of the car fades, the body begins to move. He claws upward, searching for a grip on the slope. He stands up, and looks down, wiping his bloody hands on his shirt. This is OWEN.

Picks up the bar. Takes a bite. Looks off at the car leaving, now on the horizon.

TITLE, big text right in front of his face, which is now looking right at the camera: THE HITCHHIKERS.

Cut to black.

2 EXT. ON THE ROAD - DAY

2

The car speeds by some mundane scenery. The driver is looking at the road, his hands clenching the steering wheel. In the back, Jack stares forward.

The driver is stealing some anxious glances at Jack through the rearview mirror.

THE DRIVER
So, where are you from?

Jack looks forward.

THE DRIVER (CONT'D)
What were you doing on the side of the road?

Still more silence. A shot of the driver's hands, flicking the turn signal and then rotating the steering wheel.

THE DRIVER (CONT'D)
Just out on a walk, or what? You travel?

Another nod.

3 EXT. THE GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

3

The car pulls into the gas station. The driver emerges, walking out to the other side of the car to fill up.

Inside, Jack sits.

He looks outside.

The driver is on the phone, anxiously speaking.

THE DRIVER
(nearly inaudible, muffled)
I just... I don't know, I'm a little scared... no, he just doesn't talk. I know, it was stupid to let him... the first place.

Out of his pocket, he pulls a polaroid picture of SARAH, a high

school girl. A shot of her face staring right at the camera, smiling, begins to flicker in and out of frame, a memory threatening to rear its ugly head.

The picture is clearly torn in half, with a boy on the other half having been torn off. A hand is over her shoulder, but it is attached to no arm.

THE DRIVER (CONT'D)
 (entering the car)
 Alright. All done. Sorry about that
 wait.

Jack slips the picture of Sarah out of the window. It falls to the ground and we linger there for a moment.

The car slowly pulls out of the gas station.

4 EXT. THE ABANDONED ROAD - DAY

4

Owen crumples the protein bar wrapper and puts it in his pocket. He sticks out his thumb.

His shirt is still bloody. He looks down, notices this, and turns it backwards.

Cars cruise by, unnoticing.

He grabs his side, clearly in pain.

Still sticking out his thumb, he fumbles for his phone. Pulls it out, only to turn it on and get low battery.

OWEN
 Shit.

He slips his phone into his pocket, and for a brief moment, in his phone case, we see the other half of this image. It's him, posed and smiling, his arm around a now nonexistent partner.

A car now begins to pull over. It's a man in his forties.

THE MAN
 Do you need a ride somewhere, man?

OWEN
 (grimly)
 Yes, just into town.

A shot of the back of him, his blood-stained shirt facing the camera. The man looks at him, assessing.

THE MAN
 Alright, then.

He gets in the back of the car.

5 **EXT. THE PARK - FLASHBACK - DAY**

5

The same familiar shot of Sarah, a MEMORY. It's warm, and vibrant. She's smiling, and looking at the camera. A guitar is playing a song.

SARAH
That's really good. How'd you learn
that?

Hand, strumming a guitar. It mutes it quickly. It's Jack's hand.

Full body shot of Jack, looking up at Sarah. A smile on his face. He's clearly in love.

JACK
It's easy, really. If you want, I
can show you a couple chords.

He starts to hand the guitar to her.

SARAH
No way, really?

Far off in the distance, a name is being called.

VOICE
Sarah! Sarah!

Sarah turns. Out in the parking lot, Owen is waiting. He's got his car door open and he's waving to her.

SARAH
I have to go, sorry. I want to, I
do, but-

JACK
(talking over her, shaking
his head)
No, it's fine. No really.

She puts the guitar down and runs off.

She walks up to him, laughing, and gives him a light kiss on the cheek. They're talking, flirting, inaudibly. The car drives off.

Jack stares at them, his eyes void of feeling.

A wide shot of Jack, still looking at the camera. Really linger here. A bird chirps in the background. He's all alone.

In the same static shot, he picks up the guitar, puts it in his case, and walks away.

6 INT. THE MAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

6

Owen sits in the back of the car. He checks his watch.

THE MAN
What were you doing out in the
middle of nowhere?

OWEN
I was on a walk. With my...
(looks down)

Sudden shots of the attempted murder. Jump cuts between the two walking out on the road, yelling at each other, Jack pushing Owen down the hill, and his head hitting the ground.

OWEN (CONT'D)
...friend.

THE MAN
(chuckling)
Some friend that was.

Owen puts his hand to his side, wincing slightly. He pulls at his shirt a bit, revealing some blood, and then quickly stuffs it behind his back.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
Everything alright back there?

OWEN
Yeah, I'm fine.

He looks out the window, longingly.

7 EXT. THE ROAD - AFTERNOON

7

The car is still silent, and tense. The radio is playing.

Suddenly, the driver brakes.

THE DRIVER
Listen, man- you gotta get out. I'm
sorry. I can't drive you any more.

Jack looks up at him. Evidently, he was not paying attention until now.

THE DRIVER (CONT'D)
I'm serious. Get out of my car.

Jack slowly moves, and gets out. He closes the door.

The driver drives away, leaving him once again standing, alone. He takes out his phone. There's a voicemail, from SARAH.

SARAH (V.O.)
 Hey, is everything alright? Jack's not picking up his phone. I knew you guys were hanging out, so I just wanted to make sure everything was good. Uh... that's all. Bye.

He deletes this, and scrolls down a bit further. There's another, older voicemail.

SARAH (V.O.)
 Hey, listen, Jack, I don't think we can hang out anymore. Owen isn't comfortable with it, and I just, I don't know. I told him we were childhood friends, but that didn't change anything for him.
 (beat)
 I'm sorry.

He dials Sarah's number. Puts the phone to his ear.

8 INT. THE WOMAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

8

THE MAN
 ...but that was back in the 90s, and you know how things were then... people were just more optimistic about most things, really.

OWEN
 (strained)
 Oh, I bet.

THE WOMAN
 And honestly- oh, I'd better stop and get gas. That is such a good price.

They pull into the gas station. It's the same one as before.

The man gets out, shuts the door, and Owen sits, looking down at the blood on his shirt. A little has gotten on his hand.

He wipes it on his pants, and looks out the window.

A shot from the picture of Sarah, still lying on the ground. In the background, Owen comes into focus. He's spotted it.

A sudden flashback of Sarah, as Owen remembers her. Less vibrant, but still warm. In the flashback, she's getting in the car.

Owen gets out curiously. The blood remains on the seat. He closes the door and walks over to the picture, bending down to pick it up.

He quickly grabs his phone out of his pocket, pulling out the case.

Back at the car, the woman approaches, a donut in one hand and her keys in the other from the gas station.

She sees the bloody seat and a look of horror slowly dawns on her face. She turns and looks at Owen, the bloody back of his shirt now showing.

Cut back to Owen, now lining up the other half of the image with the one in his phone case.

THE MAN (O.S.)

What the...

The woman drops her donut and her keys in shock. Owen, trying to ease the situation, puts his hands out, which are bloody, only adding to the woman's fear. She backs up.

OWEN

(slowly approaching)

Wait- I can explain.

THE MAN

(backing up more)

What's going on here? Are you... hurt? Did you...

OWEN

Listen, I'm...

He spots the keys on the ground.

OWEN (CONT'D)

(making a move for the keys)

Sorry.

He quickly grabs the keys, gets in, and starts the ignition. The man starts to run towards her car, but he drives away in time.

Sarah is sitting on her bed, worried. She has her phone in her hands. She's texting Owen.

SARAH
 (texting)
 hey, I'm getting pretty worried,
 please text me back
 did I do something wrong? I'm
 sorry.
 jack says he wants to talk to me
 asap. do you know anything about
 that?

She sighs, stares at her phone for a second, then gets up and shoves it in her pocket.

She heads down the stairs, out the door, and fumbles with the keys to her car.

She gets in and drives away.

10 EXT. THE ROAD NEAR TOWN - EVENING

10

Jack walks slowly, sticking out his thumb, which is still a little bloody. A single bead of sweat on his brow. He wipes it off carefully.

Things get bright. Oversaturated. A bit too loud. Cars a driving by, uncaring. Another wide shot of Jack on the road.

His heart is beating faster. He starts to breathe heavier. The MEMORY of Sarah flashes again in his mind. The hand strums the guitar again. She laughs again. He's alone again.

He watches each car pass.

He's nearly in town now.

Finally, a car pulls up. Tires squeak to a halt. Jack stares forward.

Car door opens. A foot steps out. Pan up to reveal Owen.

Jack's eyes turn wide in fear.

OWEN
 (holding up the picture of
 Sarah)
 You forgot something.

Jack turns and sprints away. Owen sprints after him.

11 EXT. TOWN - EVENING

11

Shaky, handheld clips of the chase. Jack glances back to see Owen right at his tale.

Jack ducks down an alleyway. Owen follows him. At the end of the alleyway, Jack turns left.

Owen emerges from the alleyway, looks left. There's nothing. He turns and walks forward slowly, only to get put into a headlock by Jack.

He lets out a gasp for air.

OWEN
 (between breaths, struggling
 to break free)
 You son of a- you think this will
 help anything? You think this will
 make her love you?

He kicks Jack's leg, which gives out. Jack lets go, and Owen inhales.

Jack limps out of there. His leg is clearly hurt. Owen, in a much worse state, holds his side and leaves the alleyway.

12 EXT. THE PARK - EVENING

12

Sarah sits a bench near the area where the memory took place. She looks to the entrance of the park nervously.

Behind her, a crunch.

JACK
 (panting)
 Sarah.

SARAH
 Oh my god. Owen. What happened to
 you?

JACK
 I'm fine- listen, Sarah.

SARAH
 No, you're not. You're hurt.

She starts to approach him, reaching towards what looks like a wound. In reality, it's just his bloody hand clutching his side.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 What happened? Where's-

He inches away from her.

JACK
 (frantic)
 Sarah, we need to go. Something
 happened with-

SARAH
 Go? Go where? You're not making any
 sense-

Owen bursts through the bushes on the other side of Sarah. He stands, breathing heavily, staring at Jack.

JACK
 Fine! There. The cat's out of the
 bag. You need to make a choice.
 Him,
 (points)
 or me.

Sarah looks to where he pointed.

SARAH
 What?

Jack looks at her. He swallows briefly.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 I don't understand. There's nobody
 there.

Jack squints, confused. Cut back to the same patch of grass that Owen was standing on just moments ago. Nobody's there.

13 EXT. THE ABANDONED ROAD - EVENING

13

Cars drive by once again. The same patch of road. Same wide, opening shot, but it's almost dark now.

Above shot of the body, still lying on the side of the road. It's in the exact same position as before.

Slowly, the camera pans up. Cars still moving by. On the top of the road still lies the bar, half uneaten. Maybe there's even some flies surrounding it. Linger here for a moment.

ROLL CREDITS