

EVERYTHING THEN.

by

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RIMLIGHT ROOST

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EXT. DYSTOPIAN FOREST - DUSK

The war-torn face of a survivor. A helpless one. MALCOMBE. A man stares us down with deep, saddening, penetrating eyes. He's scruffy and slightly dirty, wearing a bland ushanka and a thick woolly coat. His face has slight splatters of faint blood sprawled across. He looks down with an intense emotional gaze.

CUT TO:

INT. FESTIVE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Bright hues of colours strike us as they fade in and out of balance, overlapping and merging creating such lucid visuals. As we pull into focus, we see the source of such visuals originate from a Christmas tree. It blazes as if in the midst of a colour-matic wildfire.

As we traverse through the thick ferns reflecting off the intense light of the decorations, a chilling rendition of a CHRISTMAS SONG (undecided) begins to play. It's slow, mellow, and harrowing.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: EVERYTHING THEN

EXT. DYSTOPIAN FOREST (DIFF) - DAWN

The harsh winter climate is established through the mass dead shrubbery and pastel foliage.

INT. EMPTY HOUSE - DAWN

The rustic door frame of an abandoned house creaks slightly before diffused light shafts penetrate through the opening gap. Enter MALCOMBE. Here we can see his rucksack and more of his post-apocalyptic apparel. He enters the house slowly with caution and begins traversing through the hallway. He breaths heavy, taking careful steps.

He finds his way to the Kitchen, where he begins opening draws and cabinets in search for sustenance. He opens a cabinet, examines, and takes a group of candles, placing it firmly in his already fairly-full bag. He finds scarce canned food and places it in his side-bag. As he scrambles

over the counter and re-arranges various kitchen equipment, he meets with a photo frame containing a family Christmas picture.

He stops in his tracks and slowly picks up the photo frame, taking a better and a more advanced look. He focuses on it hard, before looking up towards the lounge where presumably the photo was taken. Compared, we can see a huge difference being the room is empty with tinsel and other festive semiotic sprawled across the floor.

CUE AUDIO:
CHRISTMAS PIANO

INT. FESTIVE LOUNGE - NIGHT

We examine the prickles of the lucid Christmas tree once more. It's inspiring however also uncomfortable. Muffled voices and sounds are heard.

CHILD (V/O)
Hurry! Look at all of them!

INT. EMPTY HOUSE - ''

He looks back to the image and places it back on the kitchen worktop, giving it a pat. He makes a retreat towards the door, picking up a line of tinsel on his way out.

EXT. DYSTOPIAN FOREST (SIM) - DAY

MALCOMBE traverses through the dying shrubbery to a known location to him.

He drops his bag and stops. In the midst of the leaves rest 2 twigs tied together forming the biblical Cross. A grave. It is tied together with feeble string. One of the horizontal sticks rests uneven with the symmetry of the cross.

He sits down firmly in-front of the sticks and begins trying to fix it with his dirty fingers. He pats it slightly until it looks less-wonky. He rests his hands on his knees before reaching for his bag and removing the candle. He brushes a collection of leaves away from the base of the cross and places the candle firmly down in-front of it. He stares at it.

Beat.

He ponders, before reaching for 2 twigs and rubbing them together frantically in front of the candle, trying to ignite the flame. He rubs harder and harder before suddenly the twigs break in his hands. He stares at them before crunching them further in his grip. He breaths heavy, wiping his face with his hand. He looks up at the sky beginning to get darker. The forest canopy begins to dim.

He reaches back into his bag and removes the grounded tinsel. He holds it tight before pressing it up against his torso and inhaling. He slums down into the leaves and closes his eyes.

EXT. DYSTOPIAN FOREST (CONT'D) - DAWN

MALCOMBE awakes slowly, examining the world around him.

CUT TO:

MALCOMBE sits upright, eating an apple savagely, looking at the canopy and forest around him. He eyes wander to the candle and his focus becomes more intense. He grabs his bag and places it firmly around his shoulders. He pats the assembled grave of sticks before walking into the distance.

EXT. DYSTOPIAN FOREST (SIM) - DAY

MALCOMBE brushes his boots against the vast collection of leaves at his feet. Suddenly a cough is heard. Malcombe springs to action and hides behind a tree. He breaths hard and begins to look around at the source of the sudden noise. In the distance, a MAN sits next a huge bag. He wears a very thick coat and is almost as messy as Malcombe. Malcombe examines the situation, reaching into his coat pocket for a knife. The man rests against a tree. In his hand a pipe and the other a lighter. He goes to light the pipe. This sparks Malcombe's attention, as he is in need of a fire-starter. His grip on the knife tightens and his eyes roam around frantically, trying to think of a solution to this situation. He slowly emerges from the tree and lightly walks towards the man. His knife in front of him and his intent clear in his eyes. The noise he produces is minimal however eventually he hits a root and falls hard onto the ground - alerting the attention of LUCIUS, who jumps backward.

LUCIUS

(Alert)

Oh my god, oh god.

Malcombe immediately gets up onto his feet and places the knife in his grip in front of him. Lucius scrambles around and looks down at his knife and back up at him.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Oh god. Um.

Beat.

Lucius kicks his bag into the direction of Malcombe.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Here, have it. I don't need it.
Please.

Malcombe remains mute. His lower lip raises in order to visually assert dominance. His eyes wander to the floor where he can see the pipe and lighter rest having been dropped via the alert.

Lucius notices this gaze and looks down to the floor.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
The pipe? You want..

He is interrupted by Malcombe swinging his knife as a negative sign.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
The lighter? You want that?

Lucius hastily goes to reach for the lighter until Malcombe jolts himself forward. Lucius stops in his tracks, realizing he was going too fast, and slowly goes to retrieve the lighter from the leaf-cluttered floor. He grips it hard and begins slowly pacing step by step towards Malcombe.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
Here. Here take it. Catch.

Lucius indicates he is going to throw it. Malcombe lowers his stance. LUCIUS throws it, missing Malcombe's grip and falling to his feet. He goes to pick it up.

Suddenly, Malcombe is tackled hard by Lucius to the ground. He hits it hard. Malcombe squirms and looks to his side, seeing the knife. Lucius rests on top of him with his hands at his neck. Malcombe tries to reach for the knife however Lucius notices and tries to reach for it too. Malcombe is closer.

Lucius punches Malcombe hard in the face, forcing Malcombe's limbs to curl up slightly, giving Lucius the upper hand into retrieving the knife.

Malcombe retrieves his senses and starts beating and trying to push Lucius off him. By the time Lucius retrieves the knife, Malcombe pushes him off him and jumps to his feet. Malcombe goes to kick Lucius and it hits hard, forcing Lucius to curl into a ball. He goes for a second kick however Lucius grabs his ankle and forces him to fall onto the ground onto his back. Lucius jumps back on top of him and tries pushing the knife into his neck.

Malcombe pushes with all his strength to prevent the knife from penetrating him.

Beat.

Malcombe spits into Lucius' face. Lucius holds back and groans loud. He drops the knife. Malcombe grabs it and forces it into his stomach. Lucius moans loud as Malcombe removes it and forces it to re-enter. Lucius kicks Malcombe off him with what strength he has left, but Malcombe runs back and stabs him another several times.

Malcombe finally stops as Lucius becomes lifeless. He has small splatters of blood on his face.

We see his war-torn face again, identical to the opening shot.

He pats the corpse down and removes it's wallet. He opens it up, removes any money that's inside however in a plastic flap rests an image of Lucius content with a snowy backdrop. He looks at it hard, then back to the corpse of Lucius. He looks disgusted in himself.

CUE AUDIO: CHRISTMAS PIANO

He focuses back on the image, before gazing up to the canopy, as if it's been so long without snow, seeing it in a photograph questions his belief in where it originates.

Malcombe gets to his feet and begins walking away, picking up the lighter on his exit.

EXT. DYSTOPIAN FOREST - DUSK

MALCOMBE lights the final candle underneath the grave of twigs. He leans back, content. We see the remaining camp has lots of lit candles around. We also see a nearby bush covered in the same tinsel as before. Malcombe reaches into his coat and retrieves the photo of LUCIUS. He gazes hard.

CUT TO:

Malcombe prepares another grave next to him and ties it together with string. He places a candle underneath it and ignites the flame. He then takes the photo and burns it under the flame before leaning back.

We pull back, observing the entire camp. Numerous candles are placed around, lighting up several other graves all placed around him in a circle. It is clear that this isn't Malcombe's first kill, as shown by the strange ritual he performs by placing a lit candle by every grave, every Christmas night.

Malcombe pulls his coat closer to him before humming SILENT NIGHT.

Cut to black.

ROLL CREDITS.

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