

ZARYA

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIDDEN LAKE - DAY

A summer morning. The deep woods. An eerie quiet.

Misshapen trees hang over the mucky water.

The sun attempts to peek through the canopy but struggles.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
No Man's Land. God's Mistake.

The remains of a fish floats atop the water.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
That's what my dad called this  
place.

A pile of entrails along the shore. Flies BUZZING about.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
He told me to stay away.

A lone bubble rises to the surface of the water.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
And I did. For the longest time.

A shorebird stands peacefully at the water's edge.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
But I had to see for myself.

A dark figure underneath the water drifts silently toward the shorebird, stalking it.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
And now, well... Now I can't seem  
to pull myself away.

A violent SPLASH as something explodes from the water.

CUT TO:

THE WOODS

Two fishermen -- CLANCY and JOE, mid-thirties -- trudge toward the hidden lake. Clancy stares ahead stoically. Joe breathes heavily, sweating profusely, irritated.

JOE  
Damn, how much farther?

CLANCY

Not much.

A blood-curdling SQUAWK of the panicked shorebird in the distance. Joe pauses, alarmed. The sound ECHOES all around them. Then it ceases abruptly.

JOE

What was that?!

CLANCY

Probably a squirrel.

Joe gives him a look.

JOE

Squirrel, my ass. Sounded like a monkey getting its balls chopped off.

Clancy calmly continues on. Joe sighs, mumbling to himself, swatting at mosquitoes, pushing through the thick brush.

JOE

I just wanted to go fishing. I didn't sign up for no fuckin' safari.

EXT. HIDDEN LAKE - LATER

Clancy and Joe sit on the bank, grasping their fishing poles, staring at the still water. It's deathly quiet.

JOE

Hey Clancy, did I tell ya? My cousin's gonna become a storm chaser. Ain't that some crazy shit?

No reaction from Clancy.

JOE

I think he's just doing it to impress girls. I told him, what, you think girls like guys who drive their stupid asses into tornadoes?

He shakes his head.

JOE

I heard about this one ol' boy who got picked up by a twister, and it carried his sorry ass twenty miles over to the next county. They found him naked in a tree. Lost his ballcap, too. No thanks.

Clancy stares ahead. A long silence.

Joe sighs, bored. He checks his line.

JOE

We came all the way out here for this? Only bites I'm getting is from these big-ass mosquitoes.

He swats another bug on his arm. As he inspects the splotch of blood left behind on his skin, he hears an eerie, low-pitched TRILLING sound nearby. He listens, puzzled.

JOE

There it is again! What is that? And don't tell me it's no damn squirrel.

Clancy listens with knowing eyes. Joe stares back out at his line.

JOE

I thought you said this was a hot spot?

CLANCY

Like I said: You won't get many bites here. But when you do, it'll be a good one.

Joe isn't convinced. Setting his pole down, he walks over to the woods to relieve himself.

He unzips his pants. A STREAM of urine.

When he notices something beside him, the stream of urine abruptly halts.

On a rock, he sees a crude stick man made of twigs and acorns. However, one of its arms is partially missing. At the point where the arm is cut off, there's a substance which resembles dried blood.

JOE

What the...

Disturbed, he zips up.

JOE  
(to himself)  
Fuckin' satanists.

Meanwhile, Clancy notices something in the water.

CLANCY  
Joe, you're getting a bite.

Joe's float bobs up and down.

Joe returns, grabs his pole, tugs on the line. Reels it in.  
Examines the prize.

JOE  
Son of a bitch!

No fish. And the lure is bitten completely in half.

Clancy nods as if to say: I told you so.

Joe glares out at the water.

JOE  
Hell naw. That's just rude.

He shakes his head, mumbling, tying on a new lure.

Across the lake in the shadows, something breaks the surface  
and slowly rises from the water. Two dark eyes appear. It's  
a human -- a FEMALE.

Her eyes search and then locate the fishermen. She glares in  
their direction.

Finally her entire head emerges, and she SPITS OUT out the  
remains of Joe's lure.

She sniffs the air, detecting a scent. Looking back toward  
the fishermen, she bares her sharp fangs.

Meanwhile, Joe surveys the sky.

JOE  
My butt cheeks are sweating. That  
means it's gonna rain.

Standing, he wanders down the bank to find a new spot.

JOE  
I think I'll try over here.

Before casting his line, he notices a log beside him. On the log is a mound of gnarly teeth. Various sizes and shapes. Perhaps from animals.

JOE  
Okay, maybe not.

He quickly returns to his previous spot, mumbling as he goes.

JOE  
Shit, I didn't need to see that.  
Pile of fuckin' teeth...

He eyes Clancy.

JOE  
This place gives me the willies.

Clancy glances around, a peaceful expression. He seems to relish the surroundings.

POV: From across the lake, Clancy and Joe are being watched. They appear in a strange, REDDISH hue. The watcher makes an eerie, low-pitched TRILLING sound.

Having had no luck with fishing, Joe opens a beer and takes a swig. Then he takes out a bag of chips, a pack of powdered donuts, and a cucumber. Clancy gives him a look.

CLANCY  
Cucumber?

JOE  
I'm trying to eat healthier.

Joe takes his pocket knife and slices the cucumber.

Meanwhile, Clancy unwraps his sandwich.

As Joe snacks on his donuts and cucumber, a SHADOW moves across him. He turns and looks up, but sees nothing. He shrugs it off.

In the background, a shadowy figure hangs upside down from a tree limb, observing Joe and Clancy.

EXT. HIDDEN LAKE - LATER

Joe gulps more beer. Holds his pole. Stares at the water. And badly attempts to sing a Lynyrd Skynyrd song.

Clancy looks over and notices that Joe's fishing line is tangled in a tree overhead.

CLANCY

Joe, your line. It's... not in the water.

Joe studies his pole, oblivious. Looks behind him. Sees his line tangled in a limb above him.

JOE

Oh. Yeah. I knew that.

He attempts to untangle it. And continues singing.

Clancy eyes him stoically. Then he scans the lake, almost as if anticipating something.

A bit farther down the lake, all is calm. Near the shore, the water rocks gently. A leaf falls lazily from a tree. An insect meanders across the forest floor. A wildflower blooms.

A DROPLET falls from above and lands on the flower's petals. Then another. The droplets are red. It's fresh blood.

A CHOMPING sound. Above the flower rests a bird nest on a limb.

The female creature from the lake is now hunched over the nest, CHOMPING away. She hears Joe SINGING in the distance. She turns her head in the direction of Joe, blood and feathers on her mouth. She listens, frowning.

From out of nowhere, WINGBEATS and a SCREECH as a large bird swoops down at her, but in one swift motion she GRABS it and yanks its head off. Blood SPRAYS. She SLURPS the blood.

Joe takes another swig of beer, then CRUSHES the empty can and hurls it into the woods. Clancy frowns.

CLANCY

You shouldn't do that.

Joe BURPS, ignoring him.

After a moment: the sound of the beer can being CRUNCHED like twisted metal. Startled, Joe turns and peers into the woods, but sees nothing.

Joe turns back toward the water, shrugging it off. He grabs another beer.

Another SHADOW moves over Joe and then a BREEZE washes over him as the crushed beer can FALLS into his lap. The can now has reddish, blood-like stains on it.

Freaked out, Joe scoots the can away from him. He gawks at Clancy, who's oblivious to it all.

Then, from across the lake, a huge SPLASH. Clancy and Joe both look, unable to make out what it was.

Joe shakes his head, discombobulated.

JOE

I know I've had a few beers, but...

A tug on Joe's line. Then another. It jerks him. Something heavy.

JOE

Okay, shit's gettin' real!

Clancy squints toward the water.

Joe excitedly reels with all his might, the water SPLASHING as he does.

JOE

Whooo, dog! It's a fuckin' monster!

Joe steps to the water's edge, struggling to reel it in. He grimaces a bit.

JOE

Lordy mercy, I think I pulled a groin.

Suddenly the line goes slack. No more splashing.

Silence. Joe gazes out at his line, dismayed.

Slowly reeling in, Joe reaches down and pulls up the lure. Clancy watches anxiously, swallowing hard.

Joe examines his decimated lure. It's torn to shreds.

JOE

What in tarnation? What do you think it w--

An EXPLOSION from the water. The female creature LEAPS out and grabs Joe, pinning him to the ground.

JOE

Hi, I'm Joe. What's your--

She SNARLS as her fangs dig into Joe's neck. Joe SCREAMS.



JOE

But I just wanted to go fishing!

Clancy watches. Strangely, he doesn't appear panicked.

As she bites Joe, blood SPRAYS everywhere. Onto rocks. Onto Joe's tackle box. Onto his cucumber and donuts.

JOE

Oooh, it tickles! No, wait, it hurts like hell! Yeeoowww!

Joe's struggle is short lived. His feet jerk one last time.

JOE

At least I won't have to go to work tomorrow. Fuckin' job...

Finally he becomes motionless.

Clancy watches in awe.

On the shoreline, the female creature now sucks blood from Joe's lifeless body.

For the first time, we see her completely. She's a mermaid. Her tail flips excitedly, SPLASHING the water.

Clancy observes, mesmerized.

CLANCY (V.O.)

I never much liked Joe anyway.

He notices the SUCKING and CHOMPING sounds.

CLANCY (V.O.)

The first few times, I was nauseated by it. I mean, sure, I've seen Twilight and all those vampire movies, but... it doesn't prepare you for what it's really like.

He notices her body writhing in excitement.

CLANCY (V.O.)

But now it's, well, how do I say this... sort of a turn-on.

He adjusts his crotch area, shuffling around a bit.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
But she's part fish. I'm not even  
sure how that would work. I mean,  
scales and shit.

She pauses from feeding. Clancy snaps out of his daydream.

She raises up and turns toward Clancy. Blood drips from her  
lips.

They make eye contact. A connection.

Her expression softens. She seems almost thankful. Clancy  
nods.

Then she turns and resumes feeding.

Clancy takes a deep breath, contemplating.

Finally she backs away from Joe's body. She lifts her head  
toward the sky. Closes her eyes. And emits a blood-  
curdling, high-pitched SCREECH.

Clancy listens, fascinated.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
I didn't think I would ever get  
used to that sound. But now it's  
almost comforting.

She lowers her head. Opens her eyes. Satisfied, she  
gracefully returns to the water.

Now submerged except for her head, she turns toward Clancy  
again. She wipes blood away from her mouth, almost as if  
ashamed of it.

Clancy studies her. Then he regards Joe's lifeless body.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
I wonder if Joe will become a  
vampire now? Hopefully not a  
mermaid. That would be... all  
messed up. Maybe he'll become a  
zombie. That would be kinda cool.  
(reconsiders)  
But then I would have to decapitate  
him with a shovel. Kill him all  
over again. Poor bastard.

He looks back to the creature, but she has disappeared,  
leaving only a ripple.

Gradually the water calms. All is quiet.

Clancy gazes upward toward the forest canopy.

EXT. HIDDEN LAKE - DAY

Misshapen trees hang over the water.

The sun attempts to peek through the canopy but struggles.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
When I first discovered Zarya --  
that's what I named her -- she was  
sick. I guess she had depleted  
most of the food here. It seems  
she can't leave here -- or else  
doesn't want to.

Animal bones litter the woods.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
She needed fresh blood. I brought  
her whatever I could find.

FLASHBACK: Clancy leaves cages on a rock. The cages contain  
rats. Birds. Hamsters.

The caged animals await their doom. An eerie low-pitched  
TRILL. The animals recoil from a SPLASH in the water.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
But it wasn't enough. Her thirst  
grew. She needed more. So I...

BACK TO SCENE: A fly crawls on Joe's lifeless body. Joe's  
arm is now partially off and bloody, just like the stick man.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
Maybe my dad` was right. Maybe I  
shouldn't have come here.

EXT. HIDDEN LAKE - DAY

Clancy sits on a rock, reading a book of poetry aloud.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
But now I feel... connected.

Zarya, her head protruding from the water, listens intently  
as Clancy reads. She tilts her head, fascinated.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
My dad taught me to appreciate  
nature. To respect it.  
(MORE)

CLANCY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And she's, well, part of it.  
Somehow. She trusts me. She  
didn't ask to become... whatever  
she is.

They make eye contact. She contemplates his words.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
Where did she come from?

Zarya notices a splendid spider web. She gazes at the spider, watching it work, fascinated. She nods, almost as if communicating with it.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
Is she of God? Satan? Is it  
nature gone awry? Mother Nature's  
revenge?

Growing restless, she turns and dives back into the dark water.

Clancy closes his book and sets it aside, watching her go.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
And what now?

Her tail slices the water, disappearing into the lake.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "Five years later..."

A LITTLE GIRL plays in a kiddie pool. We see her only from behind. She's laughing. Splashing. Grasping a doll.

CLANCY (V.O.)  
Where does it all end?

A pensive Clancy sits in a lawn chair, observing the girl.

Beside the kiddie pool: a flustered rat in a cage.

The little girl eyes the rat, exposing her fangs, her mermaid tail splashing the water excitedly.

FADE OUT.

A blood-curdling, high-pitched SCREECH pierces the air.

THE END