THE BLACK

Written and Directed by

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INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

The film opens and we see two people sat in a living room together watching TV.

One of them, a heavily pregnant woman, is watching almost bored, as though the day has taken it out of her.

On a neighboring couch is her husband, also sat in the same stance, watching the show as though trying to imagine himself anywhere else but where he is now.

The show continues to ramble on in the background. The wife shifts uncomfortably in her seat and we see the husband stare worried at her bump. The worry etched over all areas of his face as he begins to sweat.

He looks away from his wife's stomach and focuses his attention elsewhere.

We see his eyes flutter over a half empty whiskey bottle hidden just out his wife's eye line, this too begins to panic him.

He begins shifting uncomfortably in his seat, and we see his grip on the arm of the sofa become more and more pronounced, whatever is eating him up inside is clearly reaching a fever pitch.

Finally he managed to muster the remanence of his self-control and stands up, he leaves into the hallway and grabs his coat and his keys.

He makes his way back into the living room.

MAN:
Just popping out for some fresh air.

He makes his exit, before his wife has the time to answer and quickly leaves the house.

We see her stare after him, a worried look coming across her face.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT.

We see the man walking down a derelict street. The street is lit by a few flashing lamposts and the dancing neon puddle reflections as though showing an underground world.

The man makes his way over to a small liquor shop we see him walk in and buy a bottle of whiskey.

He makes his way out, the bottle partially concealed in a small, brown, paper bag that leaves the end of the bottle protruding. He takes a hefty swig and makes his way back down the street.

The street is mostly empty, but for a few stragglers and people talking in a taxi cab, he makes his way past a couple in the doorway of an apartment complex.

He stops, dead in his tracks.

He turns his head slightly and sees something that makes him almost drop his bottle.

There, in the doorway of the apartment complex is his exact double, talking to a very attractive brunette. She laughs at one of his jokes, she seems to catch the man's eye, but can't quite make him out.

The man's double seems to follow the girl's eyeline and calls out to the man.

DOPPLEGÄNGER:
Hey mate, why don't you take a picture, it'll last longer!

The girl and the dopplegänger laugh, and the man walks away.

We see him still walking, his eyes wide open in shock.

The man rounds a corner and begins to wait.

Sometime later, the dopplegänger begins to walk home, the man follows him, he sees the dopplegänger's girlfriend enter the building and go into an apartment at the far end of her corridor.

The dopplegänger begins to whistle loudly, his eerie whistle of Edvard Greig's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" fills the silent streets.

He walks down an empty and deserted road, the man following close behind him. The dopplegänger suddenly stops.

The man pushes himself into the shadows and almost hugs the shadows, protecting himself. The dopplegänger bends down to tie his shoe. The man keeps himself against the wall as flat as he can get.

He finishes tying his shoe and begins to walk again still whistling. He rounds the corner.

The man relinquishes himself from the shadows and sprints to catch up with the dopplegänger.

He rounds the corner that the dopplegänger had gone round and sees a leg tuck into a corner, the dopplegänger must be turning up a side street!

The man again sprints to catch up with him and rounds the corner, he sees the dopplegänger walking again, his whistling becoming louder and louder, the man is catching him up before the bottle, that had been hidden in his pocket, drops out, smashing on the floor.

The man throws himself against a wall, but the dopplegänger continues walking and whistling.

He notices nothing and carries on as if the smashing bottle was part of the song he whistles.

The man curses himself and picks himself up, he looks around. The dopplegänger has vanished. He looks around and begins running in the direction that he thought the dopplegänger had gone.

The man runs through the streets looking for the dopplegänger but there is nothing to be found.

The dopplegänger had vanished into thin air!

INT. UNKNOWN PLACE - UNKNOWN - DREAM SEQUENCE

The man finds himself in a room with mirrors. Wearing just a shirt and tie, he finds himself in front of a mirror dressing himself as we see multiple versions around him.

As he is dressing himself, we see his reflection move unequal to himself, he notices and begins to move away from the mirror, as he turns around he is confronted with his dopplegänger who pulls out a gun and places it into his own mouth, the whistle heard from earlier can be heard and the man...

...wakes up!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The man lies in bed with his pregnant wife, he sits bolt upright and stares around the room as though expecting to see the dopplegänger sitting there.

He looks over at his wife who is still fast asleep. He silently makes his way out of the bed and quickly gets dressed.

He makes his way out into the hallway and grabs his keys from the table beside the door and leaves the house.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT.

The man makes his way down the road from earlier and arrives at the apartment building that he saw the attractive girl outside of and stares inside.

He sees that there are a number of doors along the hallway. He sees the number of the apartment that he saw the girl make her way into earlier.

He rings the buzzer, and waits.

For a few seconds there's no answer, and then he hears a voice at the end of the intercom.

GIRL:
(SLEEPILY)
Hello?

The man doesn't answer straight away, he stares at the intercom for a few seconds, as though debating whether or not he can do this. He takes a few deep breathes.

GIRL:
Hello?

MAN:
(UNSURE)
It's me.

There is a pause.

GIRL:
What are you doing here?
It's...it's four o'clock in the morning.

MAN:
(STILL UNSURE)
I know but, I just had to see you.

Another pause, this one for far longer.

Finally, the intercom switches off and a buzzing sound can be heard. The man opens the door to the building and enters.

INT. APARTMENT BULDING HALLWAY - NIGHT.

The man makes his way towards the room at the far end of the hallway and sees the door open a crack.

The girl's eye appears at the door opening, recognising who it is, she opens the door fully and lets the man in.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT.

The man steps inside to see a nice and well furnished flat with only the hallway light on.

GIRL:
(YAWNING)
Why are you here then, babe?

The man looks around and makes his way over to a random table and turns on the desk light and sees a picture which he looks at intently.

GIRL:
Hello? Anyone home?

The man continues to look at it before the girl turns him around.

GIRL: (CONT'D)
Hello? What's wrong with you? Why are you here?

The man stares at a picture on the table and picks it up.

MAN:
I couldn't bare to be without you tonight.

She looks at him, stunned.

GIRL:
You what?

MAN:
You heard me. I couldn't bare to go another second without seeing you and I had to see you.

The girl looks at him in astonishment.

GIRL:
Where’s this come from? You said only a few hours ago that we needed to take some time apart.

MAN:
And I was wrong. I realised that I couldn’t be without you, I need you.

The man stares at her intensely.

The girl drops all pretence and kisses him. She kisses him and holds him.

The eventually break apart and stare at each other for a few seconds before the girl makes he way down the hall towards the bedroom.

The man looks at the picture one last time, before placing it on the table and makes his way towards the room. We see that the picture was a picture of his doppleg̈anger and the girl arm-in-arm at a party

The girl makes her way into the bedroom, the man is about to follow suit before quickly sticking his ring finger into his mouth and pulling his wedding ring off, which he quickly slips into his pocket and follows her into the bedroom as we fade to black.

EXT. CITY STREET - EARLY MORNING.

We see the man leave the apartment complex, the girl is at the door talking to him.

GIRL:
(YAWNING)
Are you sure you need to go, babe?

MAN:
Yeah, I need to run some errands, I’ll see you later, though.

GIRL:
How long will you be?

MAN:
I’ll be back in no time, don’t worry.

The man goes to leave, but the girl taps him on the shoulder.

GIRL:
You meant what you said, didn't you?

MAN:
Huh?

GIRL:
About Bruges, you meant it, right?

MAN:
Yeah, I tell you what, I'll run some errands and you and I can sort out tickets later, and if you play your cards right, we could even leave, tonight.

The girl stares at him.

GIRL:
You're serious? You're not just fucking with me, are you?

The man stares at her again.

MAN:
Come on, would I do that to you?

GIRL:
You have before.

MAN:
Not this time.

The girl hugs him in excitement and kisses him.

MAN: (CONT'D)
I'd pack a bag now, I'll pick you up soon.

GIRL:
(EXCITED)
Okay, I'll go now!

She runs inside.

The man walks out on to the street and stares around and breathes a breath of fresh air for the first time and smiles.

INT. MAN'S BEDROOM - DAY.

The man is seen packing a suitcase. His wife is standing in the doorway, the weight of the pregnancy weighing down on her a little bit, she leans on the door frame.

She watches him through narrow eyes.

WIFE:
So they just told you to go Bruges, tonight? No warning, no explanation, no nothing?

MAN:
(STILL PACKING)
That's it.

WIFE:
Why would they do that, then? People don't just get called by their boss and told that their flying out to another country with not even a day's notice, do they?

MAN:
Train.

WIFE:
What?

MAN:
Train. We're not flying, we're going by train.

His wife looks in incredulity at him.

WIFE:
Train, plane, whatever, you're still going to another country like an hour after you were asked, what about me?

MAN:
(NOT LOOKING UP)
What about you?

WIFE:
Err...
(She points at her pregnant belly)
Maybe this? I'm going to drop any minute and you're off gallivanting around Europe?

MAN:
I’m going to be gone four days at best and you aren’t going into labour for another three weeks yet, we have plenty of time, why don’t just go and lie down, yeah, babe?

His wife looks at him in disgust.

The man picks up his suitcase which is fully packed.

WIFE:
You’ll call me the second you land.

MAN:
Again, we aren’t landing, but yes, I’ll call you.

He moves past her and gets to the door.

WIFE:
Be safe, then.

MAN:
Yeah, you too.

He gives her a quick kiss on the forehead and makes his way out of the door, as his wife stares after him.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY.

The man makes his way down the same street as before, his luggage in tow, he rounds the corner and sees a deserted street before him, except for one man. His dopplegänger.

The man freezes, his dopplegänger is right in front of him!

What’s worse, is he’s making his way towards the girl’s flat, some flowers in his hands.

The man thinks for a few seconds before running. He leaves his luggage behind and makes his way behind his dopplegänger.

The dopplegänger is at the buzzer now and is about to press the button before the man grabs him.

The two men struggle but the man begins choke the dopplegänger from behind, the dopplegänger flails wildly and tries to fend him off before eventually going limp.

The man drops the limp dopplegänger to the floor.

What to do next?

He goes to press the button, but stops himself thinking better of it, he grapples internally over what to do before deciding to drag the dopplegänger away from the scene of the crime.

The flowers remain on the ground, fluttering slightly in the breeze.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - DAY.

We see a car pulled over the side of a deserted road, we see the man in the front seat, his eyes wide open and sweat trickling down his face.

We can hear a faint muffle from the inside of the trunk of the car. The man closes his eyes and nods to himself, before getting out of the car.

He walks around the car and to the trunk, there he stands for a brief moment, before opening it.

We see the dopplegänger tied up, a gag of some kind in his mouth in the trunk of the car, the sunlight blinds him as he looks up to see what's happening and who has done this to him.

His eyes widen when he sees who it is that has done this.

He tries to edge away, even in the confines of the trunk to get away from the man, but the man pulls him out of the trunk and closes it.

The dopplegänger manages to spit the gag out of his mouth.

DOPPLEGÄNGER:
Who are you? What do you want?

The man smashes the dopplegänger's head onto the trunk itself.

MAN:
Shut up.

The dopplegänger falls to the floor and holds his head, moaning in pain.

The man grabs a pillowcase from the back of his car and brings it round to the dopplegänger.

He stands the dopplegänger up, re-inserts the gag and places the pillowcase on his head.

He holds the dopplegänger's hands up and reaches into his pocket and produces his wedding ring from earlier and stuffs it onto the dopplegänger's finger.

The dopplegänger tries to hit him, but the man grapples with him, eventually slamming against the car and subduing him slightly.

MAN: (CONT'D)
Right, come on.

The man frog-marches the dopplegänger off the road and into the neighbouring plowed field.

The man brings him to a stand still in the middle of the field and pulls out a gun from the back of his trousers.

He presses it against the dopplegänger's head.

MAN: (CONT'D)
Don't move a fucking muscle.

Although the dopplegänger is still gagged at this point, we can still hear him pleading with the man and trying to work out what is going on.

DOPPLEGÄNGER:
(GAGGED)
Why are you doing this? Who are you? Please stop.

The man presses the gun hard against what we assume is the dopplegänger's temple.

MAN:
Don't open your mouth anymore if you want to live.

The dopplegänger falls silent, almost instantly.

The man walks a few paces back.

He stares at the dopplegänger before him, his head in a pillowcase, wearing his ring and bound. Everything was perfect, everything was going according to plan.

The man points the gun at the dopplegänger and without warning and going back on his promise shoots the dopplegänger dead.

We see the dopplegänger fall to the floor with a loud thud.

Silence.

The body lies motionless on the ground, blood appearing on the inside of the pillowcase as the cool wind blows the dirt around him.

The man lowers the gun, he stares ahead.

The man shouts in relief, the plan had worked! He would be making his way to Bruges in just a few short hours and be free of everything, while his dopplegänger would be identified by his wife.

The euphoria, the relief the - hold on...

The man looks down.

Blood was beginning to flood the ground below him. What was happening?

We pull back to see a bullet wound has appeared in his forehead. He touches it and sees more blood. He begins to panic.

He drops the gun in panic and tries to move forward, but before he can do anything, his eyes roll upwards and he collapses.

He is dead.

We pull back to see the field with two indenticate bodies lying there.

All we can hear is the ambience of the scenery, the breeze that fills the air and the odd car from a few miles down the road.

The final thing we see as we pull up, is the man lying dead on the floor, a look of surprise on his face and a single tear rolling down his cheek as we pull up.

Fade to black.

THE END.