

PENUMBRA

By

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Absolute darkness.

ANTI-JOHN
Do you remember me?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE VOID

John opens his eyes.

He's stuck somehow in the expanse of a void- no light, no ceiling, no floor- just the dark in every direction. Small, purple lights can be seen glowing in the distance around them- and in the distance, what looks to be a black hole hangs, slowly swirling black smoke. But as John takes this all in, the darkness around him seems to be pulling away his essence in every direction, and John starts in confusion, which slowly turns to panic.

Ahead of John, a figure materializes in the darkness: Anti-John, wearing all black, reminiscent of a dark angel.

The darkness continues to slowly dissipate John as the scene continues.

JOHN
What...?

ANTI-JOHN
Well, well, well. Look who finally decided to wake up.

JOHN
Who are you? Where am I?

Anti-John snarls at him.

ANTI-JOHN
Who am I? WHO AM I? You know who I am. You spend every waking moment in my flesh, in my house, in my life-

He pauses to control himself. John stares at him in terror and confusion.

ANTI-JOHN (CONT'D)
God damn you. I mean you help kidnap me, you take my place, you take my name, you leave me behind to get punished for your crimes...

JOHN

No, wait, that's not possible.

ANTI-JOHN

... And now you're just pretending
you don't know who I am?

Anti-John shakes his head. His expression suddenly hardens. The darkness begins eating at John at a faster pace. John yelps, but Anti-John snaps his fingers and a strand of darkness emerges and binds John's mouth, muffling him.

ANTI-JOHN (CONT'D)

Shhh. I want you to listen verrry
closely. I'm sure you've figured
out by now- we have your wife.

John's eyes widen in surprise and anger as he begins shaking, trying to thrash against the darkness.

ANTI-JOHN (CONT'D)

But look, here's the thing. She's
not gone gone yet. So if you were
to make it to Citadel now, you
might just get there in time to see
her before it's too late.

Anti-John grins at this and twirls his necklace in his hand.

ANTI-JOHN (CONT'D)

So here's the thing, JOHN. I'll let
you head off to the Citadel for
your big rescue - but you might
wanna hurry.

Anti-John looks at John, who, still gagged, is now missing both legs from the knee down. Anti-John waves his hand and the gag disappears from John's mouth. John gasps for air as he grabs his bearings.

SHADOW JOHN

Well, I wouldn't dawdle if I were
you.

Anti-John vanishes into the darkness, like a piece of black fabric folding in on itself. John, newly freed, begins flying towards the black hole as fast as he can.

John speeds through the expanse as the darkness eats away at his arms, his upper legs, and his ears before he finally reaches the black hole and flies in.

INT. BLACK HOLE

The hole is chaos- dark energy swirling quickly, as if waves of wind in a black tornado, pulling at John as he travels through in all directions, threatening to pull him under as it throbs and flashes. A surge nearly hits John in the head, and he dodges just in time, but this throws him off course as he gets sucked into the side of the vortex instead, and we watch from his point of view as the vortex pulls him under, John reaching for the light above as if drowning.

EXT. OCEAN

FLASHBACK: A hand peeks through the waves and grabs John's hand, yanking him up through the depths. As John is pulled onto a life raft, we can now see we're in the middle of the ocean. Sound is muffled, but there seems to be a panic among the people in a nearby yacht as they look over the deck at John being rescued. An unconscious John is carried by a Coast Guard to safety. In the distance, Jane stands on the deck of the yacht.

INT. MEDICAL BAY - LATER

John, disoriented, sits on a hospital bed, draped in a towel, clearly frustrated about something as he buries his head in his hands. Jane approaches the divider separating the beds.

JANE

Hi, how are you doing?

John pauses before speaking for the first time- it's as if he has to remember how to.

JOHN

Fine.

Jane enters the room fully.

JANE

I'm Jane. I'm really worried about you.

(A beat.)

I'm the only one who saw everything. I know you didn't fall by accident.

A beat.

JOHN

I don't know what you're talking about.

JANE

I saw you. I was there. I know. I
have to tell the doctors.

John nods hesitantly. Jane gets up to leave, but stops
halfway and turns back around.

JANE (CONT'D)

I'm not sure if I should be asking
you this, but why did you do it?

Silence from John. Jane waits a while, but realises she's not
going to get a response, and turns back.

JANE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked.

She starts to leave.

JOHN

I don't know why I did it. It just
felt like the easiest way to get
back.

JANE

Get back to where?

JOHN

Somewhere that isn't so... bright.
Sometimes I wish I could just
become my shadow and let it take my
place. I'd rather feel nothing than
whatever I've been feeling for as
long as I can remember.

Jane is taken aback. She comes closer to John.

JANE

What happened to you to make you
feel this way?

John thinks painfully before he speaks.

JOHN

I made a decision a long time ago,
when I was a stupid young idiot, to
leave my home and come here. I
thought I could be someone here and
I could find something that I
couldn't at home: happiness.
Obviously that was all fucking
bullshit. I'd rather be a nobody
among nobodies than a nobody among
somebodies.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

(A beat.)

I was not made for this. I wasn't ready. And now I can't go back.

JANE

Why can't you go back?

A beat.

JOHN

I can't go back.

JANE

It's gonna be alright.

JOHN

(still crying)

No it's not. No it's not.

JANE

It's gonna be alright.

Jane keeps repeating that, and the sound fades away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRIDGE OVER RIVER - DAY

Jane and John are standing on a bridge over a river. The two look at each other and Jane nods at John. He picks up a bag filled with his possessions and after taking one last look at it, he chucks it into the river. The two smile and walk away.

EXT. THE VOID

John emerges from the vortex head first; every thought and movement is an effort. He looks in the direction he's headed in and sees a light in the distance.

John surges ahead through the vortex as shockwaves emanate from the direction of his destination, passing through his body, threatening to decompose his form with every pulse.

John is clearly trying to hold his body together - mentally. His body seems to transiently disintegrate and detach at the joints, as his limbs seem to hover about them.

He roars to keep his focus as he inches closer.

JOHN

Jane! JANE!

Something warm shines on him from the source. From John's point of view, all we can see is a bright orange light.

LIGHT

John?

FADE OUT.