

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

The Queue

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OVER BLACK

SOUNDS of a busy street and deep inhalations of breath.

TITLES: 'The Queue'

FAD IN: EXT. CITY STREET - EARLY EVENING

CLOSE-UP of a WOMAN, mid-twenties, her eyes are closed and she is taking steady breaths. Her eyes snap open: they are alert. A brief moment, then

WOMAN
Excuse me, you cut the queue.

MAN (O.S.)
Sorry?

WOMAN
You cut the queue.

MAN (O.S.)
Oh sorry - I didn't see you.

WOMAN
You didn't see me.....Well...you see me now so get in the back of the fucking queue.

MAN (O.S.)
I'm sorry but there's no need to get -

WOMAN
You think this is fine, do you? You think this is normal fucking behaviour?! This is not okay! Not fine. I could be anyone, you have no idea...

Slowly, the WOMAN regains composure - taking deep and calming breaths.

CUT TO the MAN - early/mid 30s, waves of confusion and concern crossing his face.

MAN
Are you...do you need any help?

WOMAN
Why, you hiring?

MAN
That's not what I meant.

WOMAN
Neither did I.

Beat.

MAN
Sorry..I didn't mean...
sorry...

WOMAN
It's fine.

WOMAN (cont'd)
I'm fine. We're good.

The MAN turns back around to face forward in the queue. A beat, then...

MAN
(turning back
around)
You really should have your place
back in the queue.

WOMAN
(not missing a beat)
Can you just fuck off?

MAN
Sorry.
(obediently snapping
back around)

REVERSE SHOT of the queue with the MAN facing ahead and the WOMAN facing his back. The SIREN of a patrol car is heard - both the MAN and WOMAN follow the car with their eyes: the WOMAN with an icy coolness, the MAN with concern.

A CELL PHONE RINGS, it's the MAN - he answers quickly, his voice low and quiet.

MAN (cont'd)
Hi - is everything okay? Yeah I'm uh
(looks around and
lowers to a whisper)
...Yeah I'm waiting in the queue...No
a different one...they didn't have it
there either...sweetheart, please
listen to me - I went there too...I
won't come home until I've got it
okay...I promise...everything
alright?...Okay...I love you.

He hangs up the phone, takes a deep breath and nervously ruffles his hair.

WOMAN
Probably won't get into this one to
be honest.

MAN
(turning around)
Sorry, did you say something?

WOMAN
Probably won't get into this one
either.

MAN
How long have you been waiting?

WOMAN
Dunno.

MAN
But we're at the back. It hasn't
moved at all?

The WOMAN shakes her head.

MAN (cont'd)
Shit.
(looks at his watch)
Shit!

WOMAN
What do you need?

MAN
Excuse me?

WOMAN
I uh couldn't help but -
never mind.

MAN
Oh, right, just uh for my
partner.

WOMAN
Sure...Sorry.

Long Beat. MAN cranes his neck and looks at his WATCH
several times.

MAN
(turning back around)
Hey, sorry, do you know if there's
another one of these nearby?

WOMAN
Depends on what you're looking for.

MAN
(forced)
Ha, right...

The MAN starts to become restless, deciding whether or not to move on.

WOMAN

There's another one about 15 minutes from here but --

MAN

Really? Great, thanks! Right...
(takes out phone,
nearly shielding it)
What's the address?

WOMAN

I'll take you.

MAN

No really, it's fine and you've been waiting.

WOMAN

I do it to pass the time, I don't mind.

MAN

No, honestly and you can have your place back. What's the name of the other one?

WOMAN

Honestly, I'm just passing time.

MAN

If you could just tell me the name of -
(the phone dies)
No, no, no...shit. Shit! Fucking shit!

The MAN falls to a squat, puts his head between his legs and takes long deep breaths.

The WOMAN goes and gently sit next to him on the ground, but not too close.

Beat.

MAN (cont'd)

Sorry about that...

WOMAN

You'll be alright.

MAN

Yeah...have to be right?

WOMAN

You still want to go to the other one?

MAN

(looking at his watch)
Yeah, okay...yeah - only if you have time though.

WOMAN

This way.

The WOMAN gets up first, followed by the MAN, they begin to walk.

As they do a greater sense of place emerges: the streets are run-down, shops have long closed, and hints of past violence. Flashes of posters pass by: 'do YOUR part'; smiling families of threes; lush landscapes, etc. - as well as some less 'official' messages of resistance and call to arms.

Their silence has been awkwardly palpable.

MAN

You live around here then?

WOMAN

We don't have to talk.

MAN

Right, sorry.

WOMAN

If you don't want to.

MAN

Right.

A brief return to silence.

WOMAN

You don't live around here.

MAN

What makes you think that?

The WOMAN gives gives him a sly look up and down.

WOMAN

You would know all the places. By now you would anyway.

MAN

Right.

WOMAN

I don't judge you for it.

MAN
How do you mean?

WOMAN
People get territorial, but I don't.
It's pointless.

They continue to walk in silence...

MAN
Do you uh, well you wouldn't happen
to have a...um...a phone on you by
any chance?

The WOMAN shoots him a strong poker face and walks on.

MAN (cont'd)
It's just I kind of uh well I need to
be able to...
(looking for his
phone))
oh shit...shit!

The MAN abruptly stops.

WOMAN
What?

MAN
My phone I ...damn it...sorry uh
would you mind waiting just a second
I'll go --

WOMAN
I wouldn't bother. If you left it,
it's gone.

MAN
No harm in checking right?
Please if you could just
wait a -

WOMAN
Really, I wouldn't bother.

MAN
Just please, I won't be a
minute.

WOMAN
Honestly, you're just
wasting time.

MAN
No, you don't understand my --

WOMAN
Here.
(produces a phone)
You can use mine.

The MAN's face changes.

WOMAN (cont'd)
It needs charging.

MAN
That's my phone.

WOMAN
What?

MAN
That's my fucking phone.

WOMAN
Are you serious?

MAN
Give it to me!

WOMAN
You've got issues man.

MAN
Give me my phone!

WOMAN
Everyone on this stupid
fucking planet has this
stupid piece of shit!

MAN
I can just tell! You can
just tell when something's
yours - you just know! Give
to me and I'll tell you in a
second.

WOMAN
I thought you knew.

MAN
Look no offense but it's not like
that many people around have a -

WOMAN
People around here have what?

MAN
Just give it back!

WOMAN
Piss off.

MAN
Fine. Forget it! You know what keep
it - a parting gift. Just tell me how
to get to --

A LOUD BANG (O.S) and the whole area is encased in white and grey smoke. A PINGING grows from the BLAST. As the smoke clears, the PINGING subsides into SIRENS, CHANTS and the automated announcement of a LOUDSPEAKER.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O)
For your security, please move
inside. For your security, please
move inside. For your security...

The MAN recovers from the blast, he is covered in a soft layer of dust. Debris of a nearby building is scattered around - he looks up to see the WOMAN who has fallen a short distance away. The WOMAN comes to and locks eyes with the MAN.

Beat.

They move towards each other, and side-by-side, IN A VERY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT, they wade through the inferred chaos around them until the WOMAN finds an alley and both slip in to catch their breath.

MAN
Are you okay?

WOMAN
I'm fine.

MAN
You're bleeding.

WOMAN
(touching her
forehead)
Huh...you're not.

Beat.

MAN
I'm sorry...about before.

WOMAN
Don't worry about it.

MAN
No, really you were trying to help --

WOMAN
I don't blame you.

MAN
Pointless, right?

WOMAN
What?

MAN
I said...nothing...

Beat.

MAN (cont'd)
You should be getting home.

WOMAN
What is it exactly?

MAN
Sorry?

WOMAN
That you need.

Silence.

WOMAN (cont'd)
Don't worry, I don't need to know -
just curious...Place is just down
there.

MAN
We're here?

WOMAN
Down there at the end.

MAN
Oh, okay. Thank you, thank you so
much, really. And again, I'm sorry
about before..that was...I was a
prick.

He regards the WOMAN for a moment.

MAN (cont'd)
Good luck.

He turns away and starts off down the alley, for a moment
the WOMAN stays put, watching as he walks away, then...

WOMAN
Oi! I'm coming too.

The MAN heard but continues walking. The WOMAN trots to
catch up.

WOMAN (cont'd)
Is that a problem?

The MAN, seeing no feasible way out, turns around.

MAN
Sorry what was that?

WOMAN
I'm coming too. Is that a problem?

MAN
No, not at all.

WOMAN
I was waiting in line too.

MAN
To pass the time right?

WOMAN
What?

Beat.

WOMAN (cont'd)
I'm not going to rob you.

MAN
Again, I'm really sorry-

WOMAN
'Sorry' - yeah, yeah. Look,
I'm coming and in a few
minutes we'll never have to
see each other again.

The WOMAN walks past and continues down the alley.

MAN
(under his breath)
After you.

The MAN pauses, checks his watch, looks back, and then follows. The sounds of the LOUDSPEAKER, CHANTS, and CHAOS, though still present, become ever more faint...

Reaching the end of the alley, the WOMAN stops in front of a rather innocuous door.

MAN (cont'd)
This is it?

WOMAN
No address.

The WOMAN knocks out a pattern and the door creaks open.

SHOPKEEPER (O.S)
You better be quick.

The MAN enters first - the WOMAN does one last sweep of the area, satisfied they haven't followed, she shuts the door behind her.

INT. SHOP - SAME TIME

The room is, small and dark - there are no windows and it takes a second for their eyes to adjust.

The interior is haphazard and dilapidated: part corner shop, part spares and electronics, and completely random.

SHOPKEEPER (O.S)
You're late.

MAN
Late?
WOMAN
(turns to face the
SHOPKEEPER)
About to close?

SHOPKEEPER (O.S)
Just about.
(indicating to the
MAN)
Who's this?

WOMAN
Just met but he's desperate for
something. Don't know what though,
figured you might have it.

SHOPKEEPER (O.S)
And you?

WOMAN
What's in the back?

SHOPKEEPER (O.S)
I'll show ya.

The WOMAN follows the SHOPKEEPER (who remains O.S) to the back storage room, the MAN crosses to go as well.

SHOPKEEPER (O.S) (cont'd)
No. You stay.

The WOMAN turns back to look at the MAN, she gives him a nod - he acknowledges - then she exits into the back room and he is left alone.

He remains still for a moment then frantically searches every shelf, drawer, and corner of the shop.

Finally, with no luck, he kicks the nearest thing he can find - it hurts his foot more. SCREAMING, the MAN grabs on to the nearest SHELF and drags it to the ground. He slams his back against a wall and slides to the ground, his breathing heavy and defeated.

WOMAN (O.S)

Personal property mean much to you?

The WOMAN slowly walks over and sits down next to the MAN.

MAN

What is this place?

She take out a pack of CIGARETTES, offers one to the MAN, he refuses. She lights it - the embers are sharp and devilish in the dim light.

WOMAN

I really shouldn't. I actually quit.
Smoked for years then one day I
stopped. I dunno know...maybe
something about it being so rare made
me want it again.

MAN

(to himself)

How did I end up out here?

WOMAN

We both need something, don't we?

MAN

Everybody needs something.

WOMAN

I think I got what I needed.

The WOMAN pulls something out of her pocket - its a PREGNANCY TEST.

Beat. The MAN rises quickly.

MAN

Where did you get that?! Are you...
no...are there more? Where is he?!

(shouting for the

SHOPKEEPER)

Hello?!

(to the WOMAN)

Where did he go?!

The MAN runs to the back door of the shop - it's now locked. The WOMAN stays where she is: watching and taking slow, steady drags.

MAN (cont'd)
(banging on the door)
Hello?! Hey! What you just gave
her - I need it. Hey!!

Beat.

MAN (cont'd)
(turning back around)
I thought they make you...if you
are, you really shouldn't be doing
that.

WOMAN
(putting out her
cigarette)
Well, I guess we'll find out.

MAN
(crossing back
towards her)
Look. I'll um...I'll pay you for it.
What do you want?

WOMAN
You really are a prick aren't you?

MAN
No...no I'm...You don't understand,
my partner, she's not well...she
thinks - we think she's...please be
sensible here --

WOMAN
I'm doing my best.

MAN
I'm sorry...I'm sorry...
(his tone softening)
it's just...where are the
better chances? Not here.
What are you going to do if
it shows you that you're...
I - my partner - we just
make a better case, better
candidates...
(lowers voice even further)
Trust me, they'd take it
from you anyway.

WOMAN
Like they took the other ones?

The MAN doesn't respond.

Nothing survives here.

MAN
No...no it doesn't.

The WOMAN is still, staring vacantly ahead.

MAN (cont'd)
I'm sorry...Please...

Long Beat.

WOMAN
The watch.

MAN
Sorry?

WOMAN
Give me your watch.

MAN
Oh, of course...
(taking off his watch)
Of course, here.

He gingerly switches out the test from the WOMAN'S hand and replaces it with the watch.

MAN (cont'd)
Do you need anything else? I can pay
you. Really, do you need anything?

WOMAN
Wallet.

MAN
(takes out some money)
Sure, here...

WOMAN
(more forcefully)
Wallet.

MAN
I'm sorry but to get back I need my -

WOMAN
Wallet!

MAN
Okay...okay...sure.

The MAN takes out his WALLET but surreptitiously removes an ID CARD and slips it into his pocket.

MAN (cont'd)
(handing over the
wallet)
Here.

Beat.

MAN (cont'd)
Okay?

The WOMAN says nothing, she doesn't even look at him.

MAN (cont'd)
Okay...Thank you.

The MAN slowly gets up and goes to to leave, the WOMAN remains sitting very still on the floor - clutching the wallet and the watch.

The MAN reaches the door and pauses.

MAN (cont'd)
(still facing the
door)
I'm sorry. Truly, I am...It isn't
fair.

The MAN opens the door, revealing the evening light - enveloping him in a soft silhouette. He takes in a deep breath...

A LOUD BANG - the MAN remains standing for a moment, stumbles back, then falls to the ground.

HARD CUT-TO to the MAN'S face as it slams to the floor - the last few licks of life leaving his eyes.

The WOMAN comes over and methodically searches through his pockets, there is no squeamishness to the MAN's now blood-soaked shirt.

WOMAN
(taking out the ID
and test)
Did you charge the phone?

SHOPKEEPER (O.S.)
Yeah. Got a lot of missed calls...

WOMAN

Give it here.

The SHOPKEEPER tosses the phone (O.S), the WOMAN catches it and uses the MAN'S thumb to unlock it - the screen illuminates her face. She calls a number.

WOMAN (cont'd)

(a slightly affected voice)

Hello? Is this Mrs. Baker-Stuart?...
Hi dear, I'm calling from St Luke's Hospital...yes...I wish I was calling with better news...no, no oh dear no - he's safe. He's here with me now, but I'm afraid there was an incident and well he had a minor injury...in Zone 8...yes, we were alarmed to find him there too but don't worry we managed to evacuate him ...he did tell me that you might be...yes...have you told anyone dear...good - the right thing to do really...well given the circumstances, I'd be happy to bring a test over to you now...It's best not to go out on your own...I completely understand dear...best not to wake him for the time being...for peace of mind shall I bring you proof of his admittance? A personal item... his watch?...Watch and ID, of course.
(inspecting the ID)
And can I confirm that you reside at Branswick House in the South West of Zone 2...oh congratulations, what an exciting move... Alright, dear, I'll see you soon...my pleasure dear. Bye bye...bye.

The WOMAN hangs up the phone.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Upton House North East of Zone 1.

SHOPKEEPER (O.S.)

Fancy.

WOMAN

Get rid of him and call the others. I'll pick her up and we meet at the safe-house.

SHOPKEEPER (O.S)
And if it's negative?

WOMAN
We try again.

SHOPKEEPER (O.S.)
Don't seem right sometimes.

WOMAN
(studying the MAN'S
face one last time)
No. No, it doesn't.

The WOMAN closes the dead MAN's eyes, stands and walks to the door.

The MAN is dragged away by the SHOPKEEPER (O.S), leaving a thick, wide trail of blood.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME TIME.

The WOMAN stands in the alley.

She looks to the right, then to the left - to the SOUNDS of the uprising and holds for a moment.

Then, she turns away and runs - steady and with purpose.

THE END