

TAG

by

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FADE IN:

1

INT. SCHOOL, CORRIDOR - DAY

1

A tense, sweating face. Panting. Catching his breath.

LEE (35), leans back against a wall. Controls his breathing. In through his nose, out through his mouth.

For a puffed and buffed guy, Lee is surprisingly knackered.

He relaxes, for a second. He closes his eyes.

A guttural roar.

His eyes ping open and turn towards the roar.

SARAH (30), messed and stressed, the unlikeliest of heroes, is hurtling down the corridor towards him.

In a flash he's off. In a flash she's after him.

We see his feet. Running. Her feet. Coming hard on his tail.

Sarah reaches for him, tries to grab him. Misses. Again. Dangerously close. Her hand inches away from his shoulder.

Normally Sarah is insignificant. Normally Sarah's a pushover. Today Sarah's not taking any shit.

Sarah pushes herself harder. Pushes further. She swipes at him. Misses. Further again. Too far.

SMACK! Losing her balance, Sarah comes crashing face down to the floor, sliding to an undignified halt.

A loud buzzer sounds for break.

Sarah lies, sprawled in the corridor as kids spill out of classes, stepping over her, some give her a sneaky kick as they pass her by. A school girl mutters 'Hello Miss' as she passes by.

A foot stands on Sarah's fingers. She grimaces.

She gets to her feet, brushes herself down and looks ahead.

Lee stands at the end of the corridor his usual cocky arrogance resumed. Kids streaming past him. A school boy grunts 'Hello Sir' as he passes.

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2.

1

Lee gives Sarah the finger as he disappears laughing amongst the kids.

OPENING TITLE

"TAG"

2

EXT. INNER CITY SCHOOL - DAY

2

A tired school sign. Clinging to its post by a rusting nail "NORTHGATE COMPREHENSIVE".

An inactive campaign banner. A fading reminder of a half baked attempt to 'Save Our School'.

In the back round porters are wheeling out boxes and furniture to the school car park.

A gust of wind blows and the sign loses its fight, drops to ground.

3

INT/EXT. SCHOOL, SCIENCE LAB/SCHOOL FIELD - DAY

3

An old fashioned digital clock on the wall of the science lab, shows 2.25.

Sarah with strapped fingers, is sat by an open fire door of the science lab, smoking a fag. Sarah is looking out onto the school field, watching the kids on their final afternoon break.

Groups of kids hang outside around the field, some wear uniform, some gave it up months ago.

A couple of teenagers necking against a heavily graffitied wall. Hands in clothes, groping arses.

Sarah drags on her fag.

DEKS (O.S.)
Seriously though? Again?

Back in the science lab, we see DEKS (15, small and weak looking, easy target) through the flame of a lighter he's playing with. He plays with gas taps.

He's alone in the science lab which is peppered with half packed boxes of science equipment.

Taking refuge from the hell that for him is break time. This isn't the first time.

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DEKS (CONT'D)
Flat on your face, Miss. Like a
tit.

Sarah drags her fag. Looks over at him. Looks back out of the door.

DEKS
What are you doing it for Miss?

Deks walks to the window and looks out over the field, chewing on a match.

DEKS
It's just a game of Tag, init?

He watches a gang of kids, some hooded, hunched together, exchanging unheard comments. Erupt out into peels of laughter.

DEKS
So you're going to lose. So what?

One of the kids (15, bigger than his age, a generic bully) makes and holds eye contact with Deks. Menacing and threatening.

DEKS
Someone's got to lose.

Raises his hand in a gun salute at Deks. We sense a history.

DEKS
Life's just like that.

Deks turns to Sarah. Looks at her too long. We see he's interested in more than a refuge.

Sarah takes the last drag of her fag and grinds the butt into the floor. She comes into the lab.

SARAH
Sit there. Say nothing.

Deks sits, mimes zipping closed his mouth, locking it and throwing away the key.

Sarah sits tentatively. Turns to watch the clock. 2.29.

The sound of ticking.

Sarah sits, focused. Thinking. Clicks her head side to side, up and down. Warm up.

CONTINUED: (2)

Deks watches her. Strange lady. He likes strange. He keeps watching.

Sarah looks only at the clock.

The tick gets louder.

Deks looks to the clock. Looks at Sarah. Okay, he likes weird but she's like, intense and weird, intensely weird.

Tick.

Sarah's eyes. Focused.

Tick.

She bites her bottom lip. Anticipation.

Tick.

The number changes to 30.

2.30. One hour until schools out, forever.

The Buzzer. End of break. Loud and exaggerated.

Sarah erupts from the chair, bursts through the science lab door.

What the..!?! Deks is captivated.

BANG! The lab door swings shut.

INT. SCHOOL, CORRIDOR - DAY

A crowded school corridor. Kids are making their way to lessons, some can't be arsed, listening to something with a heavy base.

At one end of the corridor, alert and wired, is Sarah.

Senses on overdrive. Scanning the corridor. Her eyes darting with every movement.

Barely glimpsed among the kids, a cautious Lee moves in the hustle keeping his back to the wall.

At opposite ends of the corridor they see each other.

Sarah and Lee.

For a second their eyes meet. But only a second.

She's after him.

Sarah pelts down the corridor with a steely determination, sending kids and bags flying.

Lee sees what he's up against.

He takes off, bursts through a fire exit and runs out of the school onto the playing field.

Sarah in hot pursuit.

EXT. SCHOOL, PLAYING FIELDS - DAY

Through the door Sarah freezes as she looks to the field.

We see what she sees. A makeshift scrum, a crummy and pitiful GAGGLE OF KIDS (14), starting their P.E. lesson. We focus on three of the kids, ELLIE, SPIKE and MOUSE (an oversized, silent hulk of a kid).

Behind them catching his breath is Lee.

SPIKE (14)
What the fuck is that?

Spike's looking at Sarah. They're all looking at Sarah.

SPIKE
Are you taking the piss, Sir? It's a girl?

ELLIE (14)
You didn't say it was a lady, Sir?

SPIKE
You can't out run that?

Lee clips Spike around the head, just about gathered his breath.

Sarah sizes up the situation.

Lee starts a pep talk. Trying to incite enthusiasm and determination from his 'team'.

LEE
Right, you bunch of no hope nothings. Today this school is closing and this is your last chance to do something positive, to be part of a winning team.

His voice continues as background to the kids talk.

LEE (CONT'D)
Today you are strong. Today you can prove yourselves.
(MORE)

LEE (CONT'D)
Today you can show the world and more importantly, you can show yourselves that for once you have made a contribution, that you matter, that you will not be thrown on the scrap heap of life without a fight and if you don't, you'll have me to contend with and I am not a girl... So, to recap. You are a wall. A solid wall. And you will stay that way until I says otherwise.

ELLIE
I'd take her.

SPIKE
You'd take her?

ELLIE
I'd take her.

SPIKE
I won't take her.

ELLIE
You won't take shit.

SPIKE
I take shit.

ELLIE
You don't take shit.

Sarah starts to move towards them.

SPIKE
Oh fuck!

LEE
Hold tight!

SPIKE
She looks fierce.

LEE
Together you are indestructible.

SPIKE
She's growling?

ELLIE
She's not growling.

SPIKE
Her eyes have changed colour. Did you see that?

ELLIE
Are you seeing things now?

SPIKE
She's a vampire, man.

ELLIE
Oh fuck!

Sarah runs full force at the team. Yelling. A battle charge.

The ramshackle line of dissidents stands together arms linked. Poised and expectant, some fearful, some yelling, some foaming at the mouth, some screaming.

Mouse stands tall and solid, staying tight, no expression.

Spike is terrified and is yelling/screaming with fear.

Ellie is yelling but is pissed off and irritated by Spike.

Behind them all, yelling louder and fiercer than anyone is Lee.

Sarah charges. British bulldog style. In slow motion we watch the two sides collide.

Exaggerated slow expressions of conviction, bravery, guts, fear, pain, aggression and determination from all players.

Still in slow motion, we watch close on Sarah's face. We see her expression move from fight to failure as the realisation dawns that she has been lifted and floored by Ellie.

Her head comes crashing down on the floor with a thud.

Tick.

The clock. 2.40.

Kids are hanging and messing around in groups in the lab. They are waiting for their lesson. There is no sign of Sarah. Their lesson isn't coming.

Tick.

Deks' face behind the flame of a lighter, staring mesmerised by the flame.

Tick.

Tick.

On the white board Deks reads, "THIS IS ALL THERE IS." Hand written and heavily underlined.

Tick.

Tick.

The flash and noise of Lee past the door.

The flash and noise of mud caked, Sarah in pursuit.

Deks goes to the door. His face pressed against the glass of the porthole window and looks out into the corridor...

...Deks steps into the corridor and looks towards the end of the corridor. He sees a door swinging shut.

A choreographed chase scene within the school. Sarah is after Lee. At the climax of the chase Sarah believes she has cornered Lee but he gets away, which is a devastating blow to her confidence.

The chase ends in disaster and motivates Deks plan.

The scene ends with dialogue as follows:

SARAH
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

For the first time Sarah looks defeated.

Deks notices this.

DEKS
You know. If I'm honest. I used to think you were a twat.

SARAH
Ditto.

DEKS
But you know, all this, all of
this 'Die Hard' shit.
I mean, what do you teach? Who the
fuck cares?
Nobody ever noticed you before did
they?
They leave you to be the last one.
The last 'It'. On purpose.
They've all been tagged, so they
know they're safe and then it's
down to you and him, isn't it.
Cos they know you aren't ever
going to tagg Mr P.E.
So, in like 35 minutes, the
schools going to close and you're
going to be a loser for like,
ever.
But you.
You're not taking that shit.
You showed them Miss.
They know who you are now.
You're a shit Lara Croft.
Without the tits.

Self satisfied with his pep talk, Deks smiles at Sarah.

SARAH
I don't like losing.

Deks strikes his lighter and watches the flame as he
talks.

DEKS
Miss?

SARAH
What.

DEKS
I think I might be having
inappropriate feelings for you.

Sarah sharply looks to the clock. 2.55. Thirty five
minutes left.

DEKS (CONT'D)
Miss?

This kid!

SARAH
What!

DEKS
I've got a plan.

9

INT. SCHOOL, CORRIDOR - DAY

9

A deserted corridor.

The fire alarm sounds.

10

EXT. SCHOOL, PLAYING FIELDS - DAY

10

The fire alarm sounds.

Kids are emptying out of school and forming makeshift lines.

Teachers are milling around half pretending to count heads some aren't bothering. Lee's team are among the kids in the line.

Lee stands chatting to another teacher. A suited and booted teacher, Jonathon, approaches Lee.

JONATHON

D'you wanna do the checks and then
we can get back in?

In the distance the sound of fire engines.

LEE

It's some prick elbowing the
alarm.

Looks to his watch. 3.00.

JONATHON

You're the fire officer.

LEE

Really?

Lee storms back into the building. As he goes he motions to Ellie, Spike and Mouse to follow him.

They start to go.

JONATHON

Where d'you think you're going?

ELLIE

With him.

Lee disappears into the building.

JONATHON

You're going nowhere.

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10

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11.

10

They stand back in the line.

Jonathon is immediately distracted by an altercation in another line.

JONATHON

For Christ sake! Can you not! Can
I not turn my back for five...

Jonathon walks off ranting.

Ellie has gone from the line.

11

INT. SCHOOL, CORRIDOR - DAY

11

Lee walks down the corridor peering into classrooms.

He walks towards the double doors of the Gymnasium. There is smoke behind the glass.

LEE

Oh c'mon.

Lee runs towards the doors. Pushes through the swing doors.

A wooden broom shaft is slotted through the door handles as the door swing shut.

12

INT. SCHOOL, GYMNASIUM - DAY

12

A school gym. There are packed up boxes peppering the gym. A huge climbing frame and a few blue crash matts are the only equipment left.

Lee looks around.

The remnants of smoke. Burnt paper on the floor.

The creeping realisation that this is a set up.

Lee turns to exit. He pushes at the doors. They won't open. Fuck. Pulls at the doors. Definitely won't open. What the fuck?

Turns around.

Sarah.

She walks towards him. A warrior. Battle worn but sensing victory. A smile grows on her face as Lee desperately kicks the doors, pulls the handles.

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She approaches him slowly, eyeing her prey. In a flash she lurches for him, he quickly darts out of her way.

Lee runs to a packed up box of equipment and pulls out part of a metal goal post out. He stands. Weapon in hands. Turns to face her.

Attack the best form of defence.

Suddenly Lee charges at Sarah swinging the post. He means to seriously damage her.

Sarah lurches to the side. SMASH! The post bangs into the door behind her.

She moves across the gym.

He's after her. He's had a gutsful. He's gonna hurt her. Again he swings for her.

Sarah dives to the ground.

CRASH! The post smashes to the ground breaking into pieces. Anger and frustration take over Lee. He repeatedly bashes what's left of the post into the ground.

He turns and faces Sarah.

Sarah charges at Lee who leaps out of the way.

Deks is peering into the gym from the double doors.

ELLIE

What. The. Fuck?

Deks turns and sees Ellie.

Ellie looks to the broom that is locking the doors.

She grabs for it. Deks grabs the opposite side.

For a few seconds they have a ridiculous tug of war with the broom. Deks grabs on until his fingers can't hold it any longer. It slowly slides through his grip.

Ellie bursts through the double doors.

Lee's onto the climbing frame. With ease and agility he climbs.

Sarah looks at her strapped hand. Looks at the climbing frame.

Looks at the clock.

3.10. 20 minutes to go.

She's on the frame. Behind Lee.

Further Lee climbs.

Sarah behind him. Snapping at his heels.

Sarah laughs. Manic and deranged. She's gonna get him. There's no way she can fail.

What! Who's this! Coming along side of her! Passing her!

A foot grinds on her good hand.

Ellie.

Smiling. Sneering.

She won't let go. Harder her foot grinds. Sarah gasps. She can't let go.

She looks back. A long way down.

She tries to hit his foot off with her strapped hand.

Smiling sneering. Ellie kicks her in the face.

They both fall.

Sarah's eyes look around. She winces puts her hands to her head. We see they've landed on the crash matts.

Ellie groans, holds her leg.

Immediately Sarah regains composure. Her determination ever growing. She's gonna get this dick, if its the last thing she does.

Her hair is a mess, her clothes torn, her face swollen and bloodied.

Lee carries on up the frame.

With an urgent renewed sense of purpose, Sarah pursues Lee.

He makes it to the top.

She is fast behind him.

At first victorious, he swiftly realises he has nowhere to run.

He looks down. It's a long way down.

Finally, Sarah can see she has won.

Again he looks down. Considering the jump.

Deks pulls away the crash matts.

Sarah reaches the top.

A face off, Sarah and Lee.

They trade stares.

Lee knows he's lost.

He laughs. Delirious. Deranged. Defeated.

Sarah is exhausted but makes one last lunge at Lee's side.

It ain't over till its over!

Lee instinctively arches his back.

Sarah misses. Lunges too far. Loses her balance.

Sarah falls off the frame.

Sarah has been strapped and braced to a stretcher. She is unrecognisable with a full head brace and strapping on her whole body. The paramedics are getting ready to take her to hospital. This looks serious.

In the back round the blues and twos of a fire engine.

Teachers and kids have gathered. Lee is sat in a shock blanket next to the ambulance. Visibly shaken. He thought Sarah had died.

Deks is next to Sarah.

He approaches Lee.

DEKS

She said no hard feelings Sir.
Me. I think you're a wanker, but
she don't think you're that bad.
She wants to know if you're okay?

The paramedics lift Sarah ready to put her into the ambulance.

Lee stands walks beside the stretcher.

Guilty, shocked, regretful.

LEE

Its just a game. A stupid fucking game. Look at you...

As Lee talks, with invincible effort Sarah pulls her fingers away from the strapping and with an almighty other worldly yell, tags the side of a horrified Lee's leg.

The buzzer sounds for end of day. End of term. End of school.

"TAG"

FADE OUT.

THE END