

10 TURNS

A Short

Written by

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EXT. LAKE, XAI XAI, MOZAMBIQUE -- DAY (2001)

From behind, in the soft light of late afternoon, we look on a WOMAN standing alone at the edge of a lake. CLOSER...

She's painfully thin. The tattered white dress she wears envelopes her body like a robe. Her hair is gone, as is her mind. She just stands there, very still, gazing off with her arms down by her side, searching. CLOSER NOW...

She holds an object in her hand. The woman takes the object into both hands, hands that look as if they could be over a century old. She runs her nailless fingers over the object and we see it to be a watch, an old GOLD POCKET WATCH.

The watch is in terrible condition. The lid is missing, the glass panel is cracked, the seconds no longer tick with time.

The woman stares down at the watch with tears swelling in the corners of her eyes. Looking at her now, we see festering sores cover nearly every inch of her ashen face.

For some moments the woman just stares down at the watch with her fingers on the winding crown. Suddenly she wheezes a deep breath of air through her sick lungs. She closes her eyes and whispers a final word under her breath, as we hear--

CLICK..CLICK..CLICK. The woman is turning back the winding crown and time itself.

Booming blasts, quaking, falling debris, voices from the deep, all strained through time suddenly overwhelm the scene--

TRANSITION TO:

INT. COAL MINE, SOUTH AFRICA -- DAY(1975)

We are half a mile deep down underground in a dark tunnel.

A man wearing a headlamp drives a cart along the long walls of coal, picking up rubble left by the blasting crew.

The SCRAP DRIVER stops and climbs out of his cart with his shovel. He plods over to the wall and thrust his shovel into a pile of loose debris.

The man walks back over with the rubble and dumps it into his cart. A surge of dust clears and the light from his headlamp suddenly catches something metallic buried within the rubble.

EXT. MINE ADIT, MINE -- LATER DAY

MINERS draped in soot file out of the mine into the light.

EXT. MINE SETTLEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

The miners trickle into a dystopian-like outpost where ramshackle structures act as bars, stores, clinics and hostels.

INT. HOSTEL -- LATER

A rectangular room of bunk beds, cupboards and zero privacy. Track across the room to the SCRAP DRIVER packing his bags.

EXT. MINE SETTLEMENT -- LATER

A long line stretches to a table where two FOREMAN MEN sit handing out wages to miners complete with their contracts.

Find SCRAP DRIVER standing in the line, worn down to the nub.

INT. BUS - MOVING -- LATER

A silent cabin. SCRAP DRIVER rides wedged between other used up miners heading home.

PULL OUTSIDE THE BUS

-- as it shudders across the lush Mozambican coast.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE, XAI XAI, MOZAMBIQUE -- (NEXT DAY) 16 HOURS LATER

From behind, in the soft light of late afternoon, we look on a WOMAN with long hair standing alone at the edge of a lake.

For some time she just stands there, very still, gazing off with her arms down by her side, searching.

Suddenly, feeling the eyes of another upon her, the woman turns over her shoulder and we see she is young with the rare combination of beauty and innocence. The woman smiles and we-

REVERSE on the subject of her happiness, the SCRAP DRIVER, standing with their TWO YOUNG CHILDREN by his side.

EXT. LAKE -- LATER DAY

The man and the woman sit with their butts on the warm sand, looking ahead at their children playing in the shallow waters.

The woman faces her husband and examines him with her eyes.

WOMAN

Your face...

She caresses the rough skin of his cheek--

SCRAP DRIVER

The work--

-- then quickly presses her fingers against his lips.

WOMAN

You're home now. I don't want to
talk about work.

A cool breeze carries over the children's playful sounds.

SCRAP DRIVER

I brought you something.

A look between them as beautiful as spilled sunlight.

SCRAP DRIVER (CONT'D)

Close your eyes.

The woman closes her eyes and the man takes her hand.

SCRAP DRIVER (CONT'D)

No peeking.

WOMAN

(smiles)

I'm not.

The man places something in her hand and curls her fingers
overtop it.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

It feels expensive. What is it?

SCRAP DRIVER

Open your eyes and see.

She opens her eyes as well as her hand to the pocket watch.

A moment as she takes in the beauty of the golden watch.

WOMAN

Where did you get this?

SCRAP DRIVER

I found it in the dark.

WOMAN

It's beautiful. It reminds me of
the Elizabeth Tower.

She kisses him.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

The woman opens the lid to the sound of time ticking away.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

It still works.

SCRAP DRIVER

You underestimate me.

She flashes him a sweet look when--

WOMAN

What's this?

-- she notices tiny letters carved inside the lid. The man leans in for a closer look.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(reading)

It says, "ten turns."

Their eyes meet. The woman then looks back down at the watch and turns back the winding crown... *CLICK..CLICK..CLICK--*

CUT TO:

A BOY chases a GIRL through a labyrinth of banana trees.

CUT TO:

CLICK..CLICK...CLICK. The woman by the lake, turning back the winding crown--

CUT TO:

The BOY and GIRL, teenagers now, kiss under a mango tree.

CUT TO:

CLICK..CLICK...CLICK. The woman by the lake, turning back the winding crown--

CUT TO:

Friends and family gather as the MAN and WOMAN get married.

CUT TO:

CLICK..CLICK...CLICK. The woman by the lake, turning back the winding crown--

CUT TO:

The WOMAN, pregnant, in severe labor, as the MAN picks up scraps in the mine.

CUT TO:

CLICK..CLICK...CLICK. The woman by the lake, turning back the winding crown--

CUT TO:

SCRAP DRIVER, looking lonely, watches men play soccer in the fields outside the hostel. His eyes can't help but travel over to the surrounding chain-link fences where scantily dressed women sit smiling.

CUT TO:

CLICK..CLICK...CLICK. The woman by the lake, turning back the winding crown--

CUT TO:

A crowded bar. An ill-looking woman has her arm draped around our drunken scrap driver, as they leave the bar together.

CUT TO:

CLICK..CLICK...CLICK. The woman by the lake turns over her shoulder to see her physically diminished husband coming home. They make passionate love in the grass.

CUT TO:

Our scrap driver can barely drive his shovel into the rubble.

CUT TO:

CLICK..CLICK...CLICK. Our scrap driver lies on a grass mat with chalk white eyes, barely able to move. He's dying. PULL BACK to his wife, by his side, looking just as ravaged.

EXT. LAKE, XAI XAI, MOZAMBIQUE -- DAY (2001)

In the soft light of late afternoon, we look on a hairless WOMAN standing alone at the edge of a lake. The tattered white dress she wears envelopes her body like a robe. She CLOSES her eyes and whispers a final word under her breath.

CLICK..CLICK..CLICK goes the winding clock and then her eyes OPEN to...

THE END.