

"KITH"

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KITH

FADE IN:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY (VIDEO IMAGE)

Horizontal shimmies of the image suggest that this broadcast was made under duress, and that it may be of some age.

Before us, a frazzled, slouched female News Anchor, 35, interviews a bespectacled, male INTERVIEWEE, 70. His suit is rumpled, but he looks professorial, credible and sincere.

Behind, broadcasting staff scamper about, and personnel on the phone or seated at computers look on-edge.

As the Interviewee winds up his comments, captions scroll intermittently along the bottom:

"Governor authorizes looters be
shot on sight"

INTERVIEWEE

It would not have mattered how we
caused the end of our World: War
or pandemic or climate change or
terrorism or the mother of all
market crashes. It was we who did
it, and not Nature herself.

The scrolling captions:

"Power temporarily restored to
10 percent; not expected to remain"

INTERVIEWEE (CONT'D)

And now, as a result of the social
breakdown we are witnessing, it
will be our children, or whomever
remains, to bear the consequences.

The tense News Anchor relaxes a bit, and nods knowingly.

The captions:

"Nationwide exodus to rural areas
expected to crest within a week"

INTERVIEWEE (CONT'D)

So I thought: Imagine for one - a solitary person - who will be the last soul alive in our World. How utterly alone he or she will feel, knowing what has been lost, knowing what nothingness is to come, and knowing what could have been.

The captions:

"President to speak soon to new martial law measures"

INTERVIEWEE (CONT'D)

I tell you: I would not want to face that desperate loneliness. That we left such a World to that poor soul is our collective shame.

Our full-screen video cuts to static, flashes once brightly, then dissolves to a centered pinpoint of light before...

FADE OUT.

SUPERIMPOSE:

"Please stay tuned to this station for emergency instructions"

FADE IN:

EXT. A CITY OF THE NEW WORLD - DAY

Under a bright clear sky, we initiate a slow glide above a small treed park that rests within a modern but silent urban area. From here, we're too high to see details below.

Misty office towers poke out of the horizon like tombstones. As we float along, it's clear that absolutely no one is about. Even animals and birds have abandoned this place.

Vehicles are in sight, but they have been abandoned in-place: The middles of intersections, over curbs, halfway through store windows, or collided with one another.

We now leave what was a modern business area and coast above an older, mixed residential and mom-and-pop retail district.

The Sun is not yet high, but already it washes away a morning mist that haunts the ground, as we move lower...

Almost indecipherably the soft prose of KITH, a young woman, maybe late teens, breaks the silence. Only gradually might we detect the rhythm and rhyme of Alone, by Edgar Allan Poe:

KITH (V.O.)
... From childhood's hour I have not been;
As others were, I have not seen...

MONTAGE - EXT. COMMERCIAL AREA - DAY

We will soon meet Kith, the voice's owner, but it is her neighborhood into which we now descend for a close look:

- A) Some buildings are roofless. Many are windowless. Much of the brickwork has been scarred black by fire, and a few walls have collapsed into great piles of rubble.

KITH (V.O.)
...as others saw;
I could not bring my passions from
a common spring.

- B) We see piles of broken concrete, glass, drywall, and twisted reinforcement bars. Wrecks litter the roads, yet some avenues are scraped clean - as if steam shovels had tried to recover civilization, before conceding defeat.

KITH (V.O. CONT'D)
From the same source I have not
taken my sorrow.

- C) At foundations and walls, vines and towering weeds mix with graffiti, some of which, among the gang-style tags and sexual content, is poetic and written with orange fluorescent paint in a distinctive, florid penmanship.

We pause at one of these, by Amy Lowell (In Darkness):

"Must all of worth be travailed
for, and those Life's brightest
stars rise from a troubled sea?"

- D) A medical center is in good shape at the ground floor but most of its second floor and roof are gone. On one side of it is a looted grocery, and on the other a JCPenney is in only slightly less rough condition. Our poet resumes:

KITH (V.O. CONT'D)
I could not awaken my heart to joy
at the same tone;
And all I loved, I loved alone.

- E) A stretch of sunken roadway is filled with stagnant water to resemble a huge latrine, with a mailbox heaved through a store window - the perpetrators now long, long gone.

KITH (V.O. CONT'D)
 Then - in my childhood, in the dawn
 Of a most stormy life - was drawn
 From every depth of good and ill,
 The mystery which binds me still...

- F) Near a store, with its front sheared away, sits another vast pile of shovelled-debris. It's like some attempt was made to clean up after a disaster, but which stopped when the denizens realized the fruitlessness of it all.

KITH (V.O. CONT'D)
 From the Sun that round me rolled
 In its autumn tint of gold,
 From the lightning in the sky
 As it passed me flying by...

- G) Across from a ransacked library, a tipping bungalow has no front wall - it looks like a girl's cutaway dollhouse.

KITH (V.O. CONT'D)
 From the thunder and the storm,
 And the cloud that took the form...

- H) As we glide nearer, at last some movement is detected: A rat slithers between fallen slabs, a fly buzzes past, a stray dog nibbles at garbage, a worn flag flaps meekly at half staff - as our poet wraps up her soliloquy of Poe.

KITH (V.O. CONT'D)
 When the rest of Heaven was blue,
 Of a demon... in my view.

- I) We find ourselves closer still, to see posters and scraps of headlines on poles and walls that may explain a bit:

"What comes after the End?"

"Quarantine of the Survivors"

"Condemnation Day is nigh"

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - DAY

The mood brightens as sunshine reflects off white walls and metal and puddles, and at last we detect some natural sounds of bird chirps, cricket chirrs, and gently flowing water.

Opposite a shuttered plaza is a creek that rolls peacefully beneath an arched pedestrian overpass to a thicket beyond.

We cross the overpass, to be nearer Kith. Wherever she is, she splashes before sampling Keats' Song of the Indian Maid:

KITH (V.O.)
 O Sorrow,
 Why dost borrow
 The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips -
 To give maiden blushes...
 (Kith giggles)
 To the white rose bushes?

As we enter and navigate the thicket, we still only hear Kith, as she dunks her head joyfully with an even bigger splash. She gurgles, and comes back up with a happy moan.

KITH (V.O. CONT'D)
 Ohh! Or is it thy dewy hand the daisy tips?

EXT. POND - DAY

Kith is close: Though now silent of poetry, her splashes and soft coos pick up as we emerge from the dense thicket:

It's practically a lagoon, within a verdant camouflage of insulation from the civilization that surrounds it. Only a few tall, distant buildings are visible above the canopy.

The pond water is clear, though at one end is a stagnant swirl below a drainage pipe that pokes out of the ground.

Across, in a clearing between the foliage and waterline, lie a school yearbook, photo album, large calendar and backpack. Above these, draped over a branch, are someone's clothes.

And at last: Kith, our poet! Ten feet in, disclosed to us in a modest bare-back view, she bathes in waist-deep water.

Thin and athletic, but not muscular, from what we see she is very attractive in a waifish way - perhaps due to her uneven, sopping wet, shoulder length, self-cropped hair.

Her delicacy implies she'd be vulnerable in this decayed New World, but from her rosy attitude she must manage just fine.

Even still, as happy hums resume, our p.o.v. shifts to maybe someone who watches her from dense foliage across the pond.

CLOSE-UP - DIRECTLY BEHIND KITH'S SHOULDERS AND HEAD

Whatever it was, that's enough for Kith! She halts her song abruptly, and turns over a shoulder to glare right at "us".

Very pretty.

But deadpan, and apprehensive, as her sixth-sense kicks in.

ANGLE ON Kith, obscured slightly from across the pond within the tree branches. With a last dunk under, she yelps at the cool water temperature before she sloshes her way to shore.

CLOSE-UP - KITH ASHORE

Even in her solitude, as she drapes herself with a towel at-the-ready, she peeks about modestly to ensure nobody sees.

LATER

Kith is dressed rather clean and stylish: Loose-fitting slacks and top, for climbs or runs, yet still quite posh.

Her hair is combed up and back, as much as is possible with her shortish hair, into a cute French Chignon.

She leans over the water to take some into plastic bottles, for drinking or cooking. After the second one she reacts...

KITH
Oh, arrgh!

She grabs a branch and scrambles to snare a sock that floats off in the direction of the swirly bubbly area in the pond.

KITH (CONT'D)
Gotcha.

Recovered, she stands tall to complete her daily ablutions:

A touch of light pink lipstick, and lotion for the cheeks.

To a hand mirror, tiny tweezers pull an errant eyebrow hair.

Lastly, a pat-down, and a feminine wiggle and shrug inside her clothes to adjust everything to perfect comfort.

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN/OVERPASS - DAY

Kith prances out of the thicket, with a shopping bag in one hand and the backpack slung over a shoulder.

She crosses the overpass with grace, but still displays some athleticism to clear a gap where concrete has fallen away.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Kith hums as she marches through the emptiness and debris.

But she is startled to a standstill as, before her, a raven caws and launches from the ground into the air. She moves up close, to crouch over a sewer grate at the curb side:

CLOSE-UP - A DEAD RAT - ITS THROAT TORN BY THE BIRD

ANGLE ON Kith, as she unhesitatingly bags the rat with a doggie poop bag at-the-ready, before she goes on her way.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING (PERCIPIENCE) - DAY

Kith approaches a decrepit, five-storey tenement that looks on the verge of demolition. But to her, this is home:

"Percipience", it says, spray-painted along one wall in big orange letters.

She halts before the signage: The second "p" is smeared, so she doffs her parcels and pulls out a paint can to fix it...

So!

Kith is the orange-graffiti artist who's marking up town.

From atop a slab, she whistles as she retouches the smudge.

Finished up, she retakes her bags, switches to a musical hum, and makes her way toward the main entrance.

But her tune mutes just this side of it, where she slows at a storage room door: There's little glass left in its wire mesh security window, and cobwebs fill what remains.

Kith shudders, and glares at the door as she passes by it.

As happened back in the thicket, we switch briefly to the p.o.v. of perhaps someone watching from a short ways away.

The scrutiny elicits an over-the-shoulder peek from Kith, but it's not fearful. It's like she's used to it.

Arriving at the main entrance, broken façade windows reveal the foyer, with a caved-in ceiling where water drips down.

But Kith moves right past this entrance...

And she lobs her bags into a bucket attached to a rope, that goes up, beside a door-less stairwell entry. In she goes!

Windows at each floor of the stairwell let us see Kith scale the broken stairs, athletically, with big jumps. And as she does, she grunts audibly - and certainly not very ladylike.

At the third floor - beyond which, inside, we see that the stairwell is simply gone - she climbs out the window.

Where she scales a rope ladder at-the-ready, to floor four.

"Super Kith" dips inside that window, then leans out to work a pulley to draw her bucket of parcels up from the ground.

SERIES OF SHOTS - INT. PERCIPIENCE - DAY

It's a tour of the fourth-floor of the building, as Kith's hums and echoing steps get louder as they come nearer:

- A) A long corridor, torn open electrical panels, an unrolled fire hose, collapsed ceiling tiles, more graffiti, and floors littered with plaster, glass and bits of clothing.
- B) Through one open apartment door we see broken dishes, and walls mouldy and grimy or blackened from smoke damage. A cockroach skitters by here. A rat scurries by there.
- C) Through a door-less apartment we see a chair at a window, and a beer bottle and an ashtray on a side table, as if someone casually sat there to watch the end of the world.
- D) Through a third door, we see a huge tree limb that fell or has grown right inside the window and into the room.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY (SAME TIME)

Kith emerges from a stairwell. As she lugs her bags across twisted debris, she skips over a soggy mess and jumps a gap.

KITH

Hello, my fine moat to protect me.

She drops her bags, spins, braces a pretend shield at her chest, and waves a pretend sword at some unseen enemy.

Kith smirks, retakes her supplies, and launches a tightrope walk on a 2x4 board across another gap. The board bounces from her hundred and ten pounds, but she ignores the peril.

SERIES OF SHOTS - INT. KITH'S APARTMENT

As Kith nears, we tour her well-kept destination: Home.

- A) It's a feminine place: Air from the window wisps at lace curtains. A quaint reading chair, dining table and desk decorate as much of it as we first see, from the doorway.
- B) We move inside to see a made-up bed, that fills a third of the tiny place, covered by a pretty, decorative throw.
- C) Across from the bed is a counter and sink. In one corner is what may be a thunder mug, or something for that purpose. Beside the window, a rifle stands on its stock.
- D) And books everywhere: Cultural and historical, from the Rococo to the Crash of 2008, from lighter fare such as the History of Hollywood, to literature and poetry and politics of every era - Eliot, Wadsworth and Malcolm X, Hemingway, William F. Buckley, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.
- E) But all's not fair: A bucket captures a drip from a hole in the ceiling, and water stains and papered-over mould on one wall indicate chronic leakiness and dampness.
- F) Last up is a teddy bear on a shelf among doilies and candles, and an attempt to have wiped coarse graffiti off of one wall to replace it with some of Kith's fluorescent orange - of half-quotes, happy pictograms and cupids.

And among her satiny hums, Kith's footsteps close in...

INT. KITH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kith stomps in and drops her parcels onto the counter.

She grabs an analog clock on her bedside table. The plastic face is gone. She gives a shake. Sighs. Turns the hands.

KITH

I'd say that took me an hour and a half. Ten-fifteen? Sounds good.

Back at the counter, she hums as she pours out the contents of her parcels: New casual shoes with tags attached, food tins, cello-wrapped packs, water bottles, and lighter fluid.

She stops humming, and groans, when she exposes the yucky rat-in-a-bag, wherein she invades a cupboard for a pot.

[An odd mode of character ID begins: At first it's Kith, squeaking out different voices. Later, voice actors could take over, or a Mel Blanc-type for imitations. For example, Tom the sarcastic cat could sound a lot like Billy Crystal!]

KITH AS SOMEBODY
What's on tap for tonight, Kith?

KITH
Didn't you see what I brought in?
Mmm-good. And later on I've got an
appointment for a massage, or maybe
a movie. An early one, 'cause I
wanna beat the crowds.

She noisily readies a plate and utensils on her table.

KITH (CONT'D)
Uh, see someone at the pond today?

KITH AS SOMEBODY
You mean, besides you?

KITH
I thought for a sec... never mind.
The water's getting so cool.
What'll happen if Winter comes
early this year? Should we find
somewhere new. Yeah, like I'd ever
leave Percipience. Even if I did,
I'd come back some day. It's home!

Slowly, Kith stiffens, loses her smile - and her enthusiasm.

KITH (CONT'D)
Oh I wonder if Tom's... coming.
See... what I... mmm... Tom?

Somebody's let the air out of a tire - and Kith's the tire.

She gazes haltingly around the place. The silence soaks in,
and she sinks softly into her reading chair. She makes no
sound at all, and freezes, deadpan, with shoulders slumped.

Her only movement is soft blinks, but even these cease, and
she commences a frozen stare to become one with the silence.

LATER

Happy-Kith is back, as she cooks dinner with vigor, crashes
pots about, kicks drawers shut, and hums and coos joyfully.