

APOCALYPSE POKER

by

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EXT. FOREST - DAY

A massive, dead forest with burnt trees and charred dirt.

In a smoking crater lies a tall, thin STRANGER. Unconscious. He has pale skin with a weird tinge of green. Dark hair and eyes.

He WAKES with a shudder and a gasp.

Collecting himself, he slowly rises, groggy. Looks around, sees a path heading off into the distance. He follows it at a stagger.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - DUSK

The Stranger crests the top of a hill and sees a massive cityscape in the distance. No lights. It looks as dead as the forest. Everything is deathly quiet.

A highway leads toward the city. Broken down cars and dead bodies everywhere.

He continues on, still woozy.

EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING

The bombed-out remains of the massive metropolis are right on top of him now.

As he moves down the desecrated street, a sudden pain in his head stops him cold. He shakes the cobwebs out and sees:

An ALLEY to his left.

There's something strange about it. He feels drawn to it. He moves toward it.

EXT. ALLEY - EVENING

The dirty, dripping alley is also mute except for one thing:

A doorway with a buzzing neon sign lit up nice and bright directly above it:

"BAR"

The Stranger stumbles against the grimy wall toward the door. Another burst of pain. He clutches his forehead in agony. Blood trickles from his mouth and nose.

Using the brick wall for support, he gasps and groans as he edges along the alley wall.

He stops just short of the door.

No sounds, save the unusually loud crackling of the neon sign. His heavy breathing pierces the quiet extra loud.

He reaches for the door with a quivering arm and flings it open.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Inside, the dim cave of a bar is barely lit by a sickly glow.

The Stranger stops in his tracks as the door slams behind him.

He scans the room for anything.

It's a very large bar with plenty of tables and chairs for patrons.

Except there's no patrons.

Well, just a few:

There's what seems to be a BARTENDER (40's-50's) behind the large bar dominating the inside of the establishment.

In the far corner of the bar, seated at a decrepit round table, are THREE FIGURES. Playing cards. Drinking something. Smoking something.

He can't make out just what they look like from over here.

But he can see the Bartender.

Bald. Strange smile. Wiping glasses. Staring right at him.

STRANGER

What--

BARTENDER

--And a what to you, too.

STRANGER

Where... Where is this?

BARTENDER

There's no easy answer to that.

The Stranger looks over to the figures at the table. They look at him briefly, then go back to their business.

The Stranger turns back to the Bartender, with a quizzical look on his face.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Just friends over there.

The Stranger still has the same look. Something's familiar, but he can't remember what.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Friends of yours, mine. Whatever.
Go sit. They'll take care of you.

The Stranger hesitates.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Oh. You want something to drink?

STRANGER
Water.

BARTENDER
The strong stuff, eh? Coming right
up!

The Stranger shuffles slowly over to the lone table in the back. As he gets closer and closer he can see the three figures much clearer now.

One is very large and muscular, quite solid-looking.

One is gaunt and malnourished, bones visible through skin.

The other is average-looking -- but sporting some sort of horrible skin disease.

HULKING MAN
Don't worry, he's not contagious.

STARVING MAN
For now.

Confused, the Stranger leans in for a better look at the three.

HULKING MAN
Just siddown. You're makin' me
nervous. Pull up a chair. Have a
drink.

He sits and continues to stare emptily at his three newfound companions.

The Hulking Man leans uncomfortably into the stranger's personal space.

HULKING MAN (CONT'D)
 You really don't remember anything,
 do you?

The Stranger shakes his head and squints, trying to remember something.

STRANGER
 A flash... Some darkness... I--

HULKING MAN
 --The usual.

The Starving Man throws his cards down in a huff.

STARVING MAN
 Will you just get this shit over
 with? Christ, always the theatrics
 with you.

DISEASED MAN
 You usually prefer him this way.

The Starving Man gives the Diseased Man a dirty look.

HULKING MAN
 He's on my side on this one. Ya
 gotta ease the kid in. Shock and
 awe don't work in this situation.

Throughout this exchange, the Stranger remains silent and still with a blank expression.

STARVING MAN
 It don't look like anyone's even
 home yet.

HULKING MAN
 Give it some time. Now deal.

The Bartender heads over with a drink for the Stranger.

BARTENDER
 Go easy on him, folks. We've only
 just begun.

The Stranger takes the drink and gives it a sniff.

STRANGER
 I said water.

BARTENDER
 And I say drink this.
 (MORE)

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

(beat)
It'll help with the memory and what
not.

After taking a swig of the stuff with a grimace, the Stranger
slams the glass down and leans back in his chair.

STRANGER

Who the hell are you guys?

HULKING MAN

Like the barkeep says. Friends. Ya
just don't know it right now. Have
another drink.

STRANGER

Not until you tell me what's going
on.

The Large Figure lights a cigar, ignoring the Stranger's
demand.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

And who the hell plays cards at a
time like this?

DISEASED MAN

We do.
(beat)
Play. Or leave.

After a second of thought, the Stranger gets up and heads
back for the door.

HULKING MAN

I said siddown!

The Hulking Figure's voice BOOMS unnaturally, stopping the
Stranger in his tracks.

DISEASED MAN

The longer you play, the more you'll
remember.

That piques the Stranger's interest as he turns around to
face them again.

BARTENDER

Unless you don't want to know the
truth.
(beat)
Some don't.

The Bartender ushers him back to his seat gently and with an unsettling grin.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

I can tell you do, though. So sit.
Play. Learn. Remember.

The Stranger sits back down as The Hulking Man shuffles the deck.

STRANGER

What's the game?

HULKING MAN

Five card draw. A man's game. Nunna
that hold 'em shit.

STRANGER

Stakes?

DISEASED MAN

Your memory.

STRANGER

Against?

STARVING MAN

Your life.

The Stranger freezes for a moment, realizing the gravity of the situation.

HULKING MAN

It's simple. You remember by the
time we're done playing, and you get
everything back. You don't? Well
that's better left unsaid. So ya
better remember, for all our sakes.

The Hulking Man deals and everyone grabs their cards, eyeing them studiously. Everyone has a different poker face, all of them intimidating.

It's quiet save for the Bartender's whistling and wiping of glasses.

HULKING MAN (CONT'D)

Your move, kid.

STRANGER

What happened out there?

DISEASED MAN

Just play.

STRANGER
At least tell me that.

DISEASED MAN
I said--

HULKING MAN
--It's alright, we can tell him that
for an appetizer.

The Starving Man sulks and glowers at his cards.

HULKING MAN (CONT'D)
Don't mind ENNIO. He's an asshole
by nature.

STRANGER
Ennio?

HULKING MAN
Yeah. Ennio. That over there with
the baby-soft skin is PETE. I'm
WARREN. And you're--

The Stranger looks at him dumbfounded.

WARREN
Ha! That's right, no name for now.
Heh... Oh yeah, and that over there
is--

The Bartender flashes Warren a sinister look.

WARREN (CONT'D)
--That there is a man best left
unnamed.
(beat)
That takes care o' the intros. Now
let's play some fuckin' cards, shall
we?

The Stranger lays down his cards defiantly.

STRANGER
You still haven't answered my
question.

Ennio looks agitated beyond measure. Pete is still cool,
calm and aloof. Warren grits his teeth as he fans his face
with his hand of cards.

WARREN
The end happened. Simple as that,
kid.

The Stranger finds that hard to take.

WARREN (CONT'D)
Welcome to life immediately after
the fall. Quiet, huh?

STRANGER
How did--

Ennio lets out a sigh.

ENNIO
--Really?
(to Warren)
This ain't how it's supposed to go
down.

Warren looks over to the Bartender again.

The Bartender shrugs coldly.

WARREN
I'll humor ya, kid.

Ennio wants none of this.

ENNIO
Fuckin' idiot.

WARREN
What our friend is trying to say is
that you should already know all of
this--

The Stranger disagrees with a look.

WARREN (CONT'D)
--The fact you don't is what's
aggravating to him. And maybe all
of us. I'm just a little less
irritable than some.

Pete leans toward the Stranger and pipes up.

PETE
Like we said before. Play the game
and you'll remember.

WARREN
A gentleman and a scholar, as they
say. Don't play? Don't remember.
And don't a lotta things. Capiche?

The Stranger nods. Everyone draws the cards they need.
Pete folds. Warren bets. Ennio and the Stranger ante up.

Warren calls. All three lay down their cards.

Ennio's got two pair.

The Stranger has three of a kind.

Warren's got a full house.

ENNIO

Christing son of a whore! Again
with the god damn full house? Let
me see your fuckin' sleeves.

WARREN

Just breathe, Ennio. Count to ten
or somethin'.

Warren collects his winnings with a cigar-in-the-mouth grin.

Ennio reaches for the deck, annoyed.

Pete grabs Ennio's hand and gives him a dead-eye stare.

PETE

Let him deal.

Pete stares at the Stranger.

ENNIO

What?

WARREN

Yeah. Let him deal. This'll be
interesting.

(beat)

And while we play--

STRANGER

--You're going to tell me everything.

WARREN

Oh, we will. You can count on that.

Warren smiles. The Stranger grabs the deck and shuffles.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Before the big day came, there were
signs all over. A little something
here, a little something there.
Things trickling through from the
other side, people doing things they
weren't supposed to. Dealing in
matters best left to--

Warren leans in on his elbows.

WARREN (CONT'D)

--Well, best left to the unliving,
if you know what I mean.

PETE

It always starts out small. Something
moving out of the corner of your
eye. The feeling you're being
watched. It's a warning to those
who care to listen.

STRANGER

A warning?

ENNIO

Yeah, shithead. Don't get involved
in shit that ain't none of your
business.

STRANGER

What the hell are you talking about?

WARREN

Just deal, kid.

The Stranger deals the cards methodically, eyeing his table
mates with paranoia.

Pete folds his hand quietly.

WARREN (CONT'D)

A lot of fleshbags can't help but
dip their toes into the other side.
They're hungry. Curious. That's
all it takes for us to gain power.

STRANGER

Us? I'm not part of any of this.

The Stranger gets up to leave.

Ennio bolts up from his chair and gets in the Stranger's
face.

ENNIO

Sit the fuck down.

The Stranger slowly sits back down while eyeing Ennio
aggressively.

ENNIO (CONT'D)

(to Warren)

Just tell him.

PETE

Not yet.

ENNIO

I wasn't talking to you, freak.

WARREN

Ennio, sit. We're gettin' there.

The Bartender slams a glass down on the counter hard.

BARTENDER

Have another drink, Ennio.

Ennio folds his cards and stomps off to the bar to grab a drink.

The Stranger and Warren are the only ones left holding cards.

WARREN

You still in?

STRANGER

Yeah.

WARREN

Good.

Ennio's back at the table, nursing a stiff drink.

Pete leans back in his chair, arms crossed, observing everyone at once.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Like we were sayin'.

(beat)

The end came not because of us. It was all their fault.

STRANGER

Man?

WARREN

Who else? They always start it. We just step in and kick it up a notch. They're always startled with the results, which I find hilarious.

STRANGER

So, they're all--

PETE

--Not all of them.

WARREN

(points upward)

The good guys got involved. The
fleshbags scattered like so many
roaches. The planet's a full-blown
fuckin' war zone now.

ENNIO

(to the Stranger)

That's where your cunt of a face
fucked up, dummy.

The Stranger LUNGES for Ennio in a rage, grabbing him by the
collar. Ennio just grins painfully in the Stranger's violent
grasp.

ENNIO (CONT'D)

You always did choke when it counted
the most. If it weren't for you, we
wouldn't be stuck here jerking off
in the middle of kingdom fucking
come.

The Stranger flings Ennio backwards with surprising strength,
knocking him into the wall.

Ennio gets back up quickly and is just as mad as his attacker.

ENNIO (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for this you little
cocksucker.

The Stranger moves to pounce on Ennio again.

WARREN

Easy. Settle it down, boys.

An intense stare-off ensues.

PETE

Ennio, let the kid be. You do this
every time.

Ennio slowly backs off and returns to his seat, straightening
his collar and clutching his drink once again.

The Stranger remains erect and livid.

WARREN

Kid. Hey. Over here. Sit.

The Stranger finally sits back down.

WARREN (CONT'D)

You allergic to chairs and sittin'?
Whatcha got to be so mad about? You
don't remember nothin' anyway. Kinda
silly if you ask me.

STRANGER

You're all fucked in the head. This
is like a bad dream or something.
One of those where nothing is
familiar. And then I wake up and
you're all nothing. You're all shit.

WARREN

Wake up to what? Dreams are dead.
Look outside. We are the
motherfuckin' dream killers. The
angel fuckers. Nightmares are in
now. They're all the rage.

The Stranger leans back in disapproval.

STRANGER

Humans can't be responsible for all
of this. We--

ENNIO

We? Are you fucking kidding me?
You're not one of them. Think for a
fucking second. How do you feel?

The Stranger thinks for a long second.

STRANGER

Cold... Hollow...

ENNIO

Yeah. That's about right. Like
you're fucking dead. That ain't no
human feeling. Those fleshbags got
the market cornered on the opposite
of that.

STRANGER

Then--

ENNIO

--You're one of us, idiot. Put two
and two together and stop acting
like you can't remember shit. I
know you remember something. Else
you wouldn't of found your way here.

The Stranger focuses back on his cards.

STRANGER

(to Warren)

I call.

WARREN

About time.

The Stranger lays his hand down. Aces and eights.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Dead man's hand. Interesting.

ENNIO

That's fucking hysterical.

Warren lays his hand down. Three kings.

The Stranger is dejected at the loss.

WARREN

Don't worry kid. You're gettin' the
hang of it.

(beat)

Ennio should deal this one.

The Stranger rounds up the cards and slides the deck to Ennio.

ENNIO

(disingenuous)

Thanks.

STRANGER

Fuck you.

Ennio deals forcefully, with a loud flick each time a card is dealt.

PETE

Stop stalling.

ENNIO

Yeah, yeah. Now when fleshbags claim they can talk to the dead, they're either lying through their teeth, or they're telling the truth. That may seem a little too obvious to even mention, but the difference between the two can be a big fucking deal for those who ain't ready for what's behind Door #1. Or Door #2 for that fuckin' matter...

The Stranger eyes his cards sternly, deciding on whether or not to make a move.

ENNIO (CONT'D)

The point is they're tired of being enslaved to joyless idiots. They want it now. And why not? They make you suffer before giving you pleasure. We give you pleasure before making you suffer. Why are we so bad?

STRANGER

Evil.

ENNIO

Evil? What are you, a fucking toddler? Good and evil is horseshit. It's all about what you identify with and what you're afraid of. That's how these fleshbags really operate. And if we don't get to them, the goodniks will. And he can be worse than us when he wants to be.

STRANGER

Who? God?

ENNIO

Ha!

Warren puts an arm in front of Ennio's animated frame.

WARREN

I'll take it from here.

Pete folds. Warren, Ennio and The Stranger are still in.

WARREN (CONT'D)

That humorless jackanapes has done more harm to this planet than good. Way more than the boss.

STRANGER

Lucifer.

WARREN

Good with names, bad with faces, kid. You remember anything yet?

The Stranger puts down his cards for a second as he leans back, looking up at the ceiling.

STRANGER

I remember being...thrown...being hit...hard...a blast of
(MORE)

STRANGER (CONT'D)
 something...something
 bright...something--

PETE
 --Let it come. Think freely. Don't
 struggle.

Warren bets high, grinning. Ennio slams a shot and folds.

ENNIO
 Fuck.

The Stranger matches Warren's bet.

WARREN
 Anything else?

STRANGER
 It felt like I was in some kind of
 fight maybe.

ENNIO
 A fucking battle is what it was.

WARREN
 Shush.

The Stranger strains to remember anything else but comes up empty.

STRANGER
 There's nothing else.

WARREN
 Yet.
 (beat)
 Call.

The Stranger lays his hand down.

Three of a kind - tens.

Warren lays his hand down.

A straight.

The Stranger pounds the table in frustration.

WARREN (CONT'D)
 Easy, now. It's alright. You're
 learning. Remembering. That's all
 that matters.

The Stranger's chips are nearly gone. Pete quietly rounds up the cards and shuffles to deal.

The Stranger pushes back from the table a bit forcefully, scraping the chair on the floor loudly.

STRANGER

I'm out.

WARREN

No such thing.

ENNIO

Are you serious? After all this
shit?

STRANGER

I can't remember anything. It's all
a moving blur. Nothing's clear.

WARREN

That's why you gotta keep playing.

The Bartender slides out from behind the bar and is behind the Stranger in a flash.

BARTENDER

Just have a drink and relax. Where
else do you have to go? Our friends
here are doing you a big favor.
Just humor them.

The Stranger eyes the drink and the bartender suspiciously.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Please.

The Bartender's smile is creepy and off-putting. Like it wasn't really there or something.

The Stranger slowly grabs the drink and takes a sip.

STRANGER

Not bad.

The Bartender claps his hands slightly and smiles that awful smile again.

BARTENDER

Excellent. Now play.

The smile is gone now, left by an even more unsettling blank stare.

The Stranger turns back to the table to find everyone staring at him expectantly.

ENNIO

You in, dummy, or what?

The Stranger eyes Ennio aggressively and tries to settle back in.

STRANGER

I'm all in. No matter what.

He pushes what little chips he has left forward.

WARREN

This is it. The one hand that takes us to the finish line. If this one don't do it, well, we'll just have to kill you.

Warren, Ennio and Pete all laugh maniacally.

PETE

He's right. You're at a crossroads now.

STRANGER

We'll see about that.

Pete deals the first few rounds of cards before speaking.

PETE

A little trivia for you. Waygates to Hell are quite hard to locate. That's why when you find one, you had better be prepared to deal with whatever lurks there.

Pete finishes dealing without looking away from the Stranger.

PETE (CONT'D)

Fleshbags are especially susceptible to their...effects. Madness, hysteria, insanity, psychosis. Everything we need to make Hell on Earth. Most of them are found by accident. That's why the results are always interesting.

STRANGER

It's insanity.

ENNIO

Chalk it up to dumb fucking fleshbags thinking they can handle what we're selling.

WARREN

Any of this ringin' a bell for you, kid?

STRANGER

Sorry, you'll have to try harder. Maybe a touching story about a boy and his dog.

ENNIO

You just don't fucking get it, do you?

PETE

Everything we've told you has already happened...

(beat)

...And has yet to happen.

The Stranger furls his brow at that thought.

WARREN

It's also happening right now - a thousand different ways.

PETE

Think of them as paradigms. Crude templates for what's happening all over reality.

WARREN

See this bar? Well, it's here, but it also isn't. Simple as that.

The Stranger just studies his cards.

WARREN (CONT'D)

The only reason you step back out in that alley when you leave here is because you expect to see it.

If you want to step out into dead space, that's where you'll end up. Follow?

STRANGER

Call.

ENNIO

He asked you a question, dummy.

WARREN

It's alright, Ennio.

(beat)

We're just about finished here anyhow.

ENNIO

This piece of shit traitor knows more than he's letting on. Ever since he walked in the door, he's been playing us for dupes.

STRANGER

I'd choose my next words carefully, thin man.

(to Warren)

Call.

ENNIO

The games are over, dummy. Time to pay the motherfuckin' piper.

WARREN

'Fraid he's right. We thought you would've come around by now. But, it seems your stubbornness is gonna be your downfall.

PETE

The boss has an excellent replacement for you.

STRANGER

I said call.

ENNIO

Didn't you--

WARREN

--Fine.

Warren lays his hand down.

Three kings.

The Stranger lays his down.

Four kings.

Warren, Ennio and Pete are completely baffled.

ENNIO

How the f--

The Stranger closes his eyes. He remembers something...

FLASHBACK:

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

The area is drenched in carnage and smoke. Corpses everywhere.

In the middle of it all, a large rock outcropping stands alone, apart from the trees.

Standing on it are Warren, Ennio and Pete - wearing different garb but still the same forms.

Ennio chews on some sort of meat-covered bone while brandishing a large knife.

Pete is covered in black cloaking and wearing a plague mask.

Warren, sporting a tailored suit and a black trenchcoat, grips a bloodied ANGEL WARRIOR by the neck in one hand and holds a massive bastard sword in the other.

Cigar in mouth, he mildly grimaces as he finishes the Angel off, impaling with his sword.

Warren kicks the dead Angel to the side nonchalantly as he sees someone approaching:

The Stranger.

WARREN

Well if it isn't Switzerland himself.

The Stranger is pissed, black hollow eyes raging as he holds a massive, blood-drenched scythe.

STRANGER

You.

WARREN

Yes?

STRANGER

Do you even realize what you have done?

ENNIO

That's the idea, you indecisive fuck.

WARREN

Welcome to our hostile takeover.

STRANGER

The balance--

ENNIO

--There you go again with the fucking balance. Don't you get it? That shit exists only to keep us all down.

STRANGER

You'll never be your own masters. We weren't made that way. He'll--

WARREN

--He'll what? We now serve a master who actually gives a fuck what we think. Look around you. This is the end of indecision. Neutrality is worthless.

PETE

This is your last chance. Acquiesce or cease to be.

WARREN

He's right as usual. No matter who we serve, we're a unit. Four forever. Don't make us have to replace you.

STRANGER

Your punishment will last for all eternity. These deaths were not in the plans.

WARREN

How do you know? If everything happens for a reason, then this was all supposed to happen and you're the one who's getting in the way. Everything dies eventually. You should know that more than anyone else.

ENNIO

Just fucking finish him.

WARREN

As much as I love a good diatribe, I'm gonna have to agree. Your resistance to the inevitable ends here. You might have scared a few angels and demons along the way, but you don't scare us.

Warren, Ennio and Pete circle around and close in on the Stranger slowly.

PETE

Your resistance has meant nothing.

ENNIO

Any last words, you laconic
cocksucker?

STRANGER

Tell Lucifer he sided with the wrong
horsemen.

WARREN

I'll be sure to pass along the
message.

Warren and the Stranger clash as Ennio laughs and Pete grins
horribly.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The Stranger smiles for the first time as his eyes turn solid
black.

ENNIO

Shit--

The Stranger lunges for Ennio again, this time knocking him
out of his chair and onto the floor.

WARREN

Ah, so you are all there, reaper.
You had me fooled.

The Stranger wallops Ennio hard before turning his attention
to Warren. He pounces up onto the table, standing straight
and tall.

STRANGER

We weren't supposed to takes sides.
The balance has been destroyed. Who
the hell do you think you are?

WARREN

Everyone--

Warren, Ennio and Pete disappear.

WARREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

--And no one.

The Bartender is directly behind The Stranger, wearing that
same frightening grin.

BARTENDER

All at once.

STRANGER

You almost tricked me. Then again,
that is your specialty.

BARTENDER

My efforts have yielded your
replacement. You're too late to
undo anything now. Even if you could,
the White Kingdom would never reward
your efforts.

STRANGER

Neutrality desires no reward. It is
a reward in and of itself.

BARTENDER

It doesn't matter what you do here.
Conform. Rebel. Every possible
outcome of this and any other
situation has already happened in
some form or another across all the
realities of existence.

STRANGER

Except for what I'm about to do.

BARTENDER

Enough talk.

The Bartender whips the Stranger around to face him, tongue
out and flicking.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

This ends now.

STRANGER

No.

The Stranger grabs the Bartender by the throat as he grits
his teeth.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

If your soul is too black to reap, I
will burn down your kingdom. Piece
by wretched piece.

BARTENDER

I can't wait to see you try.

The Stranger lets go of the Bartender abruptly and heads for
the door. He turns to glance at the table where he and the
others once sat - now empty.

STRANGER

Tell them I'm coming for them too.

BARTENDER

I'm sure they already know.
(beat)
And where do you think you'll go, my
good reaper? You're the very
definition of a pariah.

STRANGER

There's an army at the White Gates
that will be eager to hear of your
deception.

At that, the Stranger is through the door...

BARTENDER

If you see God--

...And slams the door shut violently.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

--Tell that son of a bitch to go
fuck himself!

The Bartender laughs as a flash of red gleams in his eye.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

The Stranger shuffles down the lonely highway leading away
from the city. Cars and corpses everywhere. The setting
sun glares in his face.

He comes upon an injured WOMAN, propped up against a wrecked
car. She's bleeding heavily, suffering badly. The Stranger
kneels down, leans in, studies her.

He reaches out hesitantly, but knowingly. He touches the
Woman on the shoulder. She goes limp, motionless. Dead.
No more suffering.

The Stranger rises, looks toward the horizon. He no longer
looks puzzled or confused.

He WHISTLES a somber tune. It ECHOES into the distance
unnaturally. A pale horse crests a hill in the distance.
It gallops toward the Stranger with supernatural speed.

He takes one last look back at the city and then at the dead
Woman. He mounts the horse and pets it like an old friend,
soothing it with his voice.

And then in an instant, he's off.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END