

THE FOOL

Written by

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A Short Film from The Fool's Journey

FADE IN:

Mid-1990s.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A blinding circular fluorescent lamp fills the frame.

The steady BEEP of a heart monitor echoes through the room beneath a soft, almost underwater hum.

The image slowly resolves.

From directly overhead, we drift downward through the glowing circle of light toward a YOUNG MAN (28), lying unconscious in a hospital bed.

A bandage covers the area above one ear, concealing a circular wound beneath. His face is bruised and scarred.

His eyes remain closed.

Complete stillness.

His eyelids flutter—

Barely.

Almost waking.

A series of fragmented memories flicker across his mind.

FLASHBACK:

A dragonfly rests delicately on the nose of a YOUNG WOMAN (26).

She smiles in amazement.

An awed breath.

BACK TO HOSPITAL

The Young Man remains motionless.

FLASHBACK:

The Young Woman lies in a grassy field.

YOUNG WOMAN

Rumi.

BACK TO HOSPITAL

His expression does not change.

His voice echoes from memory.

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)

Coffee usually works for most.

FLASHBACK:

Their fingers play a string game.

Her voice is playful.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

OK... Hold tight.

She laughs.

BACK TO HOSPITAL

The monitor continues its steady rhythm.

FLASHBACK:

Deep underwater.

The Young Woman swims beside a whale, drifting farther into the blue.

The Young Man struggles after her, reaching desperately toward her as she disappears into the distance with the whale.

Everything is muffled.

Oceanic.

BACK TO HOSPITAL

Stillness.

FLASHBACK:

The Young Woman giggles as she unties a red thread from her hair.

BACK TO HOSPITAL

The Young Man remains perfectly still.

The heart monitor becomes a continuous, unbroken tone.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PENINSULA - DAY

A ferry horn merges seamlessly with the flatline.

A ferry glides toward a small wooden pier.

EXT. THE CROSSING RETREAT CAMP - DAY

A pink backpack covered with playful pins is dropped heavily onto the ground.

The Young Man stands at the entrance of the retreat camp, a worn black backpack slung over one shoulder.

He wears a faded T-shirt, cargo shorts, and worn sports shoes. Bruises still mark his face, and a circular scar is visible above his right temple.

He surveys his surroundings.

A quiet retreat nestled in untouched nature.

A wooden sign reads:

THE CROSSING RETREAT CAMP

Nearby stands a tree covered with objects tied to its branches.

A small sign beside it reads:

LEAVE WHAT YOU LEAVE

The Young Man studies the tree for a moment before walking deeper into the camp.

CAMP ROAD

A free-spirited GUIDE, with long tied-back hair and relaxed bohemian clothing, leads the Young Man along a forest path toward the cabins.

GUIDE

Our retreat is quite unique. People
come here to slow down and reconnect.
You'll like it.

A small Jack Russell Terrier runs toward them, barking happily.

The Guide smiles.

GUIDE

That's our camp dog. He doesn't really
have a name.

The dog happily joins them as they continue walking.

EXT. CABIN

They stop in front of a modest wooden cabin.

The Guide gestures enthusiastically around the camp.

GUIDE

Yoga starts soon over there...

Breathwork tomorrow morning in that big hut.

We're building a sand mandala in the center.

Then we'll destroy the whole thing. So cool...

Oh... and we will watch the meteor shower tomorrow night.

The Young Man barely reacts.

He interrupts.

YOUNG MAN

Where is the cliff?

The Guide looks puzzled.

GUIDE

What cliff?

YOUNG MAN

The cliff... For the jump...

The Guide stares blankly.

YOUNG MAN

The rebirth ritual...

The Guide shakes his head.

GUIDE

I've never heard of it.

The Young Man grows increasingly frustrated.

YOUNG MAN

The wake up call answered or something
like that.

The Guide's expression hardens.

YOUNG MAN

That's why I came...

The Guide sighs.

GUIDE

There is no such thing.
People come here to calm the mind...

The Guide walks away.

The Young Man watches him leave, confused.

He turns toward the cabin.

On the wooden steps lies a Tarot card.

He picks it up.

THE FOOL.

He studies it quietly before entering the cabin.

EXT. YOGA HUT - LATE AFTERNOON

Participants move through a yoga session inside an open
wooden pavilion.

The instructor's calm voice drifts through the air.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR (O.S.)

Reach up one more time... and exhale...
Namaste.

The Young Man watches from a distance.

He looks around.

Then quietly walks away.

EXT. RURAL PATH - DAY

He follows a narrow path leading out of the camp.

Behind him—

The camp dog barks.

He turns.

YOUNG MAN

Hey! Nameless, you coming with me?

The dog runs after him and happily falls into step beside him.

YOUNG MAN

You know any cliff around here by a lagoon?

They wander through winding forest trails.

The dog faithfully follows.

YOUNG MAN

Can't be that hard to find...

They climb higher.

At the top of a rocky overlook, the landscape opens before them—

Endless trees.

Sea beyond.

The sun sinks toward the horizon.

The Young Man slowly scans the landscape.

Searching.

His bruised face remains unreadable.

But there is no cliff.

No lagoon.

Only silence.

INT. CABIN - MORNING

Morning light spills across the room.

The Young Man lies asleep on the bed as sunbeams fall across his face.

The Young Woman's voice echoes.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

Wake up!

Don't fall asleep...

He opens his eyes.

In the corner of the room, the pink backpack remains untouched on a chair.

FLASHBACK:

The rhythmic clatter of a typewriter.

Words appear across the page.

THESIS

The Search for Order & Meaning

This study examines how individuals construct meaning through systems of order, belief, and behavior, and how these structures influence perception, choice, and identity.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

They do this sunrise breath work thing.
So if you wake up and I'm missing,
don't panic.

Behind him, The YOUNG WOMAN packs for the weekend on the bed, dressed in a white tank top and underwear.

YOUNG WOMAN

Apparently when you slow your breathing down, your mind finally catches up with your body.

Relaxed, playful and quietly full of life, she slips a cassette labeled "WEIGHTLESS" into her pink backpack.

She looks toward him.

YOUNG WOMAN

You'll love the camp...

Without looking up from his thesis—

YOUNG MAN

I'm not sure I wanna be trapped in the middle of nowhere.

She smiles.

YOUNG WOMAN

Trust me. It's just for the weekend.

BACK TO CABIN

The Young Man stares blankly at the pink backpack.

Her voice echoes once more.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

The winds of dawn hold the secret.
Stay awake.

He closes his eyes again and buries his face into the pillow.

EXT. BREATHWORK HUT - MORNING

Participants sit in quiet circles inside an open wooden pavilion.

The Young Man watches for a moment.

Then joins them.

He sits awkwardly among the group.

The instructor speaks with calm assurance.

BREATHWORK INSTRUCTOR
Alright... Gently breathe in through
your nose. And slowly exhale through
your mouth.

The Young Man follows, uncertainly.

As his breathing settles—

FLASHBACK:

EXT. RURAL FIELD - DAY

The Young Man and the Young Woman sit together in the grass.

A dragonfly lands delicately on her nose.

She laughs.

YOUNG WOMAN
Look at that!

YOUNG MAN
Wow.

YOUNG WOMAN
You know what? I think I'm gonna jump.

He looks at her, startled.

YOUNG MAN
Jump what? What are you talking about?

BACK TO BREATHWORK HUT

His breathing grows heavier.

BREATHWORK INSTRUCTOR
Through the nose...

FLASHBACK:

RURAL FIELD

She smiles.

YOUNG WOMAN
Somewhere near the retreat, there's a
high cliff by the lagoon. People jump.

He immediately objects.

YOUNG MAN
You are not doing that.

YOUNG WOMAN
It's a rebirth ritual.

YOUNG MAN
That's insane!

YOUNG WOMAN
It's a wake up call answered.
We need to find that place.

She grins.

YOUNG WOMAN
Are you gonna jump with me?

He smiles and shakes his head.

YOUNG MAN
No way...

BACK TO BREATHWORK HUT

His breathing becomes increasingly strained.

Faster.

Less controlled.

BREATHWORK INSTRUCTOR

Hold...

FLASHBACK:

RURAL FIELD

They lie together in the grass.

The Young Woman gazes toward the sky.

YOUNG WOMAN

The winds of dawn hold the secret. Do
not sleep.

He smirks.

YOUNG MAN

Says who?

YOUNG WOMAN

Rumi.

YOUNG MAN

Coffee usually works for most.

YOUNG WOMAN

Says who?

YOUNG MAN

Socrates.

They laugh.

He smiles.

YOUNG MAN

OK, me...

BACK TO BREATHWORK HUT

His breath turns rough.

Almost panicked.

BREATHWORK INSTRUCTOR
Longer... Allow the body to soften...

FLASHBACK:

ON THE ROAD

A weathered 1990s car winds through the countryside.

The Young Woman searches radio stations.

Music.

They sing together.

YOUNG MAN & YOUNG WOMAN
Nothing to carry...
Nothing to fear...
We are weight-

She turns the volume higher.

A TRUCK HORN explodes through the moment.

A truck slams into their car.

Metal twists.

Glass shatters.

The vehicle tumbles violently down the hillside.

BACK TO BREATHWORK HUT

The Young Man gasps.

His breathing collapses into panic.

BREATHWORK INSTRUCTOR

Allow the mind to quiet. Nothing to
do... Just breathe...

Unable to continue, he stands abruptly and leaves.

EXT. RURAL PATH - DAY

Still shaken, he walks away from the retreat.

His breathing slowly steadies.

A bark.

The camp dog runs toward him.

He looks at the dog, surprised.

YOUNG MAN

Nameless! You again?

He continues walking.

YOUNG MAN

That's getting awkward.

The dog happily falls into step beside him.

YOUNG MAN

Maybe I should give you a name. Luno?

The dog looks up.

YOUNG MAN

How about that? You like it?

A fork in the trail.

He studies both paths.

YOUNG MAN

Which way? Left? OK.

They head left.

He climbs through the woods, searching once again.

YOUNG MAN
This has to lead somewhere.

Higher.

Further.

Hope builds.

YOUNG MAN
Probably the cliff...
This might be it...
Up the hill...

He reaches the summit.

Another cliff.

No lagoon.

Only rocks, trees, and empty distance.

The dog barks.

Frustration overtakes him.

He hurls a big stone into the void.

A long beat.

CRASH.

The sound echoes through the valley.

YOUNG MAN
Fuck.

EXT. CAMP GARDEN - NIGHT

Darkness settles over the retreat.

Guests lie on large cushions beneath a sky filled with stars.

A meteor streaks overhead.

A young woman points excitedly.

RETREAT GUEST

Look at that one!

Another points elsewhere.

RETREAT GUEST

I've got one too...

From the patio, the Young Man watches.

After a moment, he quietly joins them.

He lies beneath the night sky.

Another shooting star crosses above.

His gaze drifts upward—

And the stars become the ocean.

The Young Woman swims beside a whale through deep blue water.

Soft whale calls echo around him.

He slowly reaches upward, as though she were floating just beyond his fingertips.

FLASHBACK:

HOME

The Young Woman lounges on the sofa in a white tank top and cotton briefs, absorbed in a book about whales, at night.

YOUNG WOMAN

Wow! Did you know whales can slow their
hearts down when they dive deep?

He glances up from his work.

YOUNG MAN

Wow!

As she speaks, her words blend seamlessly into the
dreamlike vision of her swimming beside the whale.

YOUNG WOMAN

They go so deep, their hearts almost
stop.
So close to death...
And still, completely alive...
In between two breaths...
Just stillness...
The quiet...
Between life and death.

BACK TO CAMP

He continues reaching toward the stars.

His eyes close.

He is on the verge of tears.

The whale song lingers.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Later.

The Young Man stares at the untouched pink backpack on the
chair.

After a long moment, he finally opens it.

Inside—

A cassette tape.

The handwritten label reads: WEIGHTLESS.

FLASHBACK:

HOME

The Young Woman pulls the tape from a shelf filled with records.

YOUNG WOMAN

There you are... My favorite!

She slips it into a cassette player.

Music begins.

She dances through the room wearing a denim jacket, green shorts, and the familiar red thread tied in her hair.

From the sofa, he smiles at her while continuing his work.

BACK TO CABIN

He sets the cassette aside.

Opening the front pocket, he finds the red thread.

It slips gently into his hand.

FLASHBACK:

HOME

The Young Woman in white tank top and underwear, searches through the messy bed.

YOUNG WOMAN

You've seen my string? Looking everywhere.

He glances up from the typewriter.

YOUNG MAN

It's in your hair...

She touches her hair. Finds the red thread.

Then laughs.

YOUNG WOMAN

Silly me...

BACK TO CABIN

The Young Man closes his fist around the thread.

His composure quietly collapses.

His body begins to tremble.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

He stumbles outside.

Faces the dark woods.

And screams.

YOUNG MAN

Why? Why?

His voice disappears into the night.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

He lies curled on the floor, clutching the red thread tightly in his fist.

For the first time—

He cries.

VISION

The Young Woman sits in stillness, as though beneath the surface. Reflections of rippling water move gently across her face and body.

She slowly lifts her gaze.

YOUNG WOMAN
Everything is perfect as it is.

A gentle smile.

YOUNG WOMAN
Just trust.

Closer.

Only her lips.

YOUNG WOMAN
Wake up!
Don't fall asleep.

BACK TO CABIN

The Young Man remains on the floor, crying.

EXT. CABIN PATIO - NIGHT

Later.

He sits alone on the porch railing, eyes swollen from crying.

A small portable cassette player rests in his hands.

He presses PLAY.

The music begins—

Then immediately distorts.

The tape jams.

He opens the player and carefully removes the tangled cassette.

Patiently, he winds the tape back into its spool.

He presses PLAY again.

The cassette is damaged.

The music stutters.

Repeats.

Breaks.

Repeats again.

Only a few seconds survive.

The song echoes faintly through the sleeping forest.

SONG

Nothing to carry...

Nothing to fear...

We are weightless...

Weightless...

Wake up...

Don't go back to sleep...

INT. CABIN - MORNING

Morning light.

The Young Man sleeps on the bed as sunlight falls across his face.

Her voice echoes.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

Wake up!
Don't fall asleep.

He wakes, disoriented.

Squinting against the morning light, he slowly gathers himself.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - MORNING

The retreat guests gather around a large circular sand mandala, carefully shaping intricate patterns of colored sand.

The Young Man approaches.

The Guide notices him.

GUIDE

Hey! Come on... Give us a hand...

The Young Man hesitates.

Then quietly joins them.

Together they continue building the mandala.

He focuses on the work.

For the first time since arriving, he loses himself in the simple rhythm of the moment.

He is no longer standing outside the experience.

He is part of it.

Eventually, the mandala is complete.

Everyone joins hands in a circle around it.

The Guide smiles proudly.

GUIDE

Great work guys! We've built this beautiful mandala. Now, it's time to destroy it.

He looks around at the group.

GUIDE

Yes! Because nothing lasts forever.

He raises his voice.

GUIDE

Ready? Time to let go!

Everyone counts together.

GROUP

Three... Two... One...

They leap forward.

Colored sand erupts in every direction.

The Young Man joins them.

He laughs as the perfect mandala dissolves beneath their feet.

Over the scene, the Young Woman's favorite song, "WEIGHTLESS" begins to play.

SONG

No beginning, no end...
No place to left to arrive.
Just the ocean in my lungs...
And the stars behind my eyes.
Just let go...
The sky will hold you.
Nothing to carry...
Nothing to fear...
We are weightless...
Weightless...
Weightless...
Wake up...

Don't go back to sleep...

Around him, people cheer and celebrate.

But he has entered another space entirely.

Acceptance.

Relief.

He laughs.

He shouts.

He smiles through tears.

Then finally allows himself to cry.

When the moment passes—

Something inside him has softened.

EXT. CAMP ENTRANCE - MORNING

His final morning at the retreat.

The Young Man stands before the tree covered with objects left behind by previous visitors.

Beside it, the familiar sign:

LEAVE WHAT YOU LEAVE

He removes the red thread from his pocket.

After a quiet pause—

He ties it to one of the branches.

He looks at it one last time.

Then turns away.

As he walks toward the ferry path—

A bark.

Luno bursts from the bushes, barking urgently.

The Young Man turns.

YOUNG MAN
Hey, Luno... What?

The dog jumps excitedly around him.

YOUNG MAN
What is it? Wha-

Luno suddenly races back into the woods.

Without thinking-

The Young Man follows.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Luno runs confidently along a narrow dirt trail.

The Young Man struggles to keep up.

YOUNG MAN
Wait! I can't catch you.

They continue deeper into the forest.

After a while-

He slows, exhausted.

YOUNG MAN
OK, where are we going exactly?
You know, I have a ferry to catch,
right?

Luno keeps moving.

The Young Man stops.

YOUNG MAN

OK, I'm leaving...

The dog doesn't even look back.

He sighs.

Then follows.

YOUNG MAN

Apparently not...

Still walking—

YOUNG MAN

Come on, Luno... I really need to go.

CLIFF

Then—

The trees open.

A lagoon.

His breath catches.

He drops his backpack.

YOUNG MAN

You found it!

Luno barks happily, circling around him.

The Young Man laughs.

For the first time—

Without restraint.

He looks toward the lagoon.

Quietly—

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)

So it's true... There is a cliff by the lagoon.

Her voice answers.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

I told you.

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)

Now what? You really wanna jump?

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

Why not?

He kneels beside Luno.

Gently strokes his head.

YOUNG MAN

Good boy... You found it. I can't believe.

Together they look out across the water.

FLASHBACK:

RURAL FIELD

The Young Woman smiles at him in the grass.

YOUNG WOMAN

Are you gonna jump with me?

BACK TO CLIFF

He keeps his eyes on the lagoon.

A quiet smile.

YOUNG MAN

I'll jump with you.

He rises.

Certain.

He runs.

And leaps.

Off the cliff.

As he falls—

Her voice surrounds him.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

Trust.

That's where you'll let me go...

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

He plunges into darkness.

Deep below the surface—

The Young Woman swims beside the whale.

She smiles.

Encouraging him.

Then gently waves goodbye.

She turns.

Swimming deeper into the blue beside the whale.

He reaches after her.

His heartbeat echoes.

Whale song fills the water.

Her voice returns.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)

In between worlds... The door has never
been closed.

She disappears into the darkness.

He closes his eyes.

He no longer fights. He gives up.

The heartbeat stops.

Only the continuous hospital tone remains.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

The Young Man lies motionless.

The continuous hospital tone.

FLASHBACK:

HOME

She dances joyfully in the living room.

The red thread still tied in her hair.

Music plays.

VISION

Reflections of rippling water shimmer across her face.

She smiles.

YOUNG WOMAN

Wake up!

BACK TO UNDERWATER

A whale circles downward into the depths.

Its song echoes.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)
The door stands open.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

The Young Man lies motionless.

The monitor remains flat.

The continuous tone fills the room.

FLASHBACK:

HOME

She laughs as she unties the red thread from her hair.

VISION

Only her lips.

Rippling water reflections shimmer.

YOUNG WOMAN
Do not sleep.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Closer.

The Young Man's face.

The flatline continues.

Closer still.

A tiny movement beneath his eyelids.

Then—

His eyes open.

The monitor surges back to life.

A heartbeat.

EXT. LAGOON - CONTINUOUS

The Young Man bursts through the surface of the water.

Gasping.

Struggling for breath.

Slowly—

His breathing settles.

He looks around.

The lagoon.

The cliffs.

The sky.

A small smile appears.

He leans back.

Floating effortlessly.

Weightless.

EXT. CLIFF ABOVE THE LAGOON - DAY

The Fool Tarot card drifts gently from the edge of the cliff.

It turns slowly as it falls toward the water.

Above it—

A dragonfly hovers.

Its wings shimmer in the light.

Then it flies away into the open sky, leaving the falling
Tarot card behind.

FADE OUT.