

SENSEFUL

by

Mike Hallett

v2.1

Mobile: 07758 834072
E-mail: micafilms@btinternet.com

'SENSEFUL'

By Mike Hallett

BLACK SCREEN:

The sound of woodlands: the wind sighs, birds chirp.

The sound of a phone dialling: shrill and unnatural.

The sound of the woods: heavy footfalls running. A man pants.

REBECCA (V.O.)

No, I can't do the twelfth.

FADE IN:

INT. REBECCA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

REBECCA TOOMEY, early 30s, listens to the phone. Lines of worry furrow her brow. She holds a cup of herbal tea and a pen which she clicks continuously, unconsciously tapping out "see" in Morse Code (... . .).

REBECCA

How about Tuesday, the sixteenth?

Rebecca cradles the tea, deriving comfort from its warmth. She closes her eyes and inhales the tea's scent.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Do you have anything first thing in the morning? I'll worry all day, otherwise. Okay, three o'clock.

Rebecca's hand moves to a New Age wall calendar showing the phases of the moon. Rebecca writes on it: "3 PM HOSPITAL".

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Sorry, can I just ask... how long does it take for the results --
(clicks pen anxiously)
Thank you. I'll see you on the sixteenth.

Rebecca hangs up and stares at the calendar. She notes the full moon on it. Rebecca circles the moon with her pen. Her gaze shifts to a piece of pottery on the windowsill: three women in a circle, holding hands. Heartened, Rebecca speed-dials the phone.

EXT. WOODS - SAME

The stump of a broken tree, a curious conical shape. A man's dirt-smearred hand clasps the side of the trunk.

INT. LIZ'S CAR - SAME

LIZ McFADDEN, 30ish, fidgety, sits in the driver's seat. A child seat in the back of the car is empty. Liz continuously crumples an 'anger ball' with one hand; with the other she dials a number on her mobile phone and holds it to her ear.

Liz huffs and bashes the mobile against the passenger seat.

LIZ

You fucking useless piece of modern technology --

The mobile rings. Liz startles and answers it.

LIZ (CONT'D)

John, you -- oh, Rebecca. No, it's okay. Just John being John.

Liz glances angrily at the empty child seat.

LIZ (CONT'D)

'Course not. What's the point in having a mobile? I can't wait till Melanie's old enough to have one of her own.

Liz stares out at a school playground.

LIZ (CONT'D)

A full moon, is it? That was quick. You know me, always up for a laugh. That's a figure of speech, Rebecca. I promise to be a good girl.

Liz kneads the anger ball more gently.

LIZ (CONT'D)

You think three will really make a difference? Well, I did mention it to Ellie but... I think you'll find she's a bit preoccupied.

EXT. FOOTPATH - MOMENTS LATER

ELLIE ROGERS, late 30s, power-dressed in a dark suit but very worried, paces along. A mobile rings in her pocket. She grabs it and answers with forced enthusiasm.

ELLIE

Hello, Ellie Rogers?
(deflates)
Rebecca. Hi.

Ellie stops impatiently at a pedestrian crossing. She presses the crossing button. A 'red man' blinks in warning.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I get the feeling I'm dead in the water. The only incoming tide is a wave of bills... Yes, I know, "stay positive and don't give energy to negative thoughts."

Ellie jabs the button repeatedly. The 'red man' blinks.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, right. Liz said you'd gone off a couple of times. To be honest the whole Wiccan thing...

The 'red man' goes out. A 'green man' shines. Ellie crosses.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

It just seems senseless.

EXT. WOODS - SAME

A dim FIGURE scurries between the trees. He disappears. The woods are still and silent.

INT. REBECCA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Rebecca and Ellie sit at the table. The silence is slightly awkward. Ellie scans the room, taking in the pottery figures on the windowsill and the wall calendar with the appointment marked on it. Rebecca checks her watch.

REBECCA

The late Liz McFadden...

ELLIE

That's one day I hope I don't live to see -- Liz's funeral.

REBECCA

(awkward laugh)

I doubt if I'll see that day.

ELLIE

What?

Rebecca shakes her head. Ellie indicates the calendar.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Is something the matter?

REBECCA

Just a precaution.

Ellie eyes Rebecca, unsure whether to believe her. A bang on the door. Rebecca hurries into the --

LIVING ROOM

Rebecca opens the front door and admits Liz. They hug. Liz's bag is overstuffed with clothes protruding through the zip.

LIZ
Sorry I'm late. Bloody John.

Liz sees Ellie in the doorway. She hurries to Ellie but her overstuffed bag spews clothes onto the floor. Liz hugs Ellie.

LIZ
Hi Ellie, you alright?

ELLIE
Yes, I'm fine. And you?

LIZ
(recovers clothes)
Oh, just the usual.

REBECCA
The usual disaster zone...

LIZ
Yeah, I just about qualify for
United Nations relief.

Ellie and Rebecca laugh. Rebecca opens her own bag and pulls out some aromatherapy oil and a packet of bay leaves.

REBECCA
Right. Bay leaves, oil of lily of
the valley. We're all set.

Ellie eyes the oil and leaves. Rebecca stashes them. Liz surreptitiously shows Ellie a bottle of "SOUTHERN COMFORT".

LIZ
Yep, we're all set.

Ellie laughs. Rebecca gives her a questioning look.

ELLIE
Let's go.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

Rebecca's car drives down a lane between hedgerows.

INT. REBECCA'S CAR - SAME

Rebecca drives. The passenger seat is piled with bags. Liz and Ellie sit in the back, singing merrily.

LIZ & ELLIE

"I can see clearly now the rain has
gone/I can see all of the obstacles
in my way"

Liz and Ellie take turns ducking behind the front seats and swigging from the bottle. They giggle.

REBECCA

What's going on back there?

LIZ

Disaster relief, my dear.

ELLIE

So, why lily of the valley and bay
leaves? Why not... buttercups and
parsley?

Liz titters and swigs from the bottle.

REBECCA

Lily of the valley for wisdom; bay
leaves for insight.

ELLIE

Oh. I thought you would have gone
for something healing?

REBECCA

It's just a test --

Liz glances between Rebecca and Ellie.

ELLIE

It was a precaution... Now it's a
test. Next it'll be an operation.

LIZ

What's this all about?

Ellie stares out the window. Rebecca focuses on driving.

LIZ (CONT'D)

I'm the one with the catastrophic
life, alright? Don't muscle in on
my turf or I'll --

Liz tickles Rebecca behind the ear. Rebecca chuckles and twists her head to avoid Liz's fingers.

REBECCA
Not while I'm driving --

LIZ
Spill the fucking beans, then.

They drive in silence for a few moments.

REBECCA
(sings)
"Gone are the dark clouds that had
me blind"

REBECCA, LIZ & ELLIE
"It's gonna be a bright, bright,
bright, bright sun-shiny day"

EXT. WOODS - SAME

The GREEN MAN, 50s, a bearded, gnomish vagabond, scampers across a path then scrambles up a slope on all fours.

EXT. DEAD-END LANE - LATER

Rebecca's car drives along the lane. It stops exactly where the tarmac ends and the dirt begins. Rebecca, Liz and Ellie emerge. Three doors slam shut.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Rebecca, Liz and Ellie amble up a dirt path and vanish into the darkness of the woods. An eerie silence falls.

DEEPER IN THE WOODS - LATER

The lowering sun slants through the trees onto Rebecca, Ellie and Liz as they trudge along a path (where the Green Man went across and up the slope).

LIZ
Ellie, I read this thing today that
will really piss you off -- the
Good News/Bad News Bible.

Ellie stops and waits for Liz to draw alongside her.

LIZ (CONT'D)
"The good news is, there is no good
news".

ELLIE
What?

REBECCA
And "the bad news is, there is no
bad news"?

Liz grins. Rebecca and Liz leave the main path and take a steep path up the hillside, leaving Ellie behind.

ELLIE
How stupid is that --

REBECCA
It's a paradox. I like it.

ELLIE
(hurries after them)
Ever tried selling a paradox?

The three women climb the path, panting heavily. Rebecca fails to see a slanting branch and it catches her face. She squeals and rubs her face. Liz guides Rebecca to a broken log near a curious conical tree-stump. Rebecca sits.

LIZ
Are you blind, or what?

REBECCA
Retinitis pigmentosa. My mum went
blind at forty-two... It's just a
test.

Liz squeezes Rebecca's shoulder. Ellie does likewise then eyes the conical tree-stump. Ellie feels a sudden shiver.

ELLIE
Let's keep moving.

HILLTOP - LATER

Rebecca, Liz and Ellie crest a hillside and emerge onto a grassy path. Ellie stops.

ELLIE
Where are we going?

LIZ
To Becky's secret glade.

ELLIE
Can't we do it here?

REBECCA
The glade's got these three little
mounds in a circle, it's magic.

ELLIE
Oh -- three mounds, three women.

REBECCA
 Yes, the power of three... Three's
 always been a sacred number.

ELLIE
 So I'm just making up numbers?

REBECCA
 No --

ELLIE
 Then why me?

REBECCA
 (marches off)
 Come on, before the light goes.

Ellie stares stonily after Rebecca. Liz hands Ellie the small
 bottle. Ellie swigs. Liz takes back the bottle and swigs.

LIZ
 I need a piss... That'll impress
 her majesty.

Ellie chuckles. Liz and Ellie pace after Rebecca.

ELSEWHERE - SAME

The Green Man stumbles from tree to tree.

STREAM - LATER

Rebecca, Liz and Ellie trot down to a stream. Rebecca steps
 across. Ellie stops and stares at the stream. Liz waits her
 turn behind Ellie.

LIZ
 Come on, Ellie. The light's green.

ELLIE
 I'm not going.

REBECCA
 What?

ELLIE
 I'm not going. I'm going back.

REBECCA
 Ellie, please --

Ellie shakes her head.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
 You agreed --

ELLIE
I'll wait in the car.

REBECCA
It must be the three of us --

ELLIE
(scoffs)
What, for your witchcraft to work?

REBECCA
Women have been gathering in threes
for thousands of years to --

ELLIE
My business is a week from hitting
the wall and all you care about is
using me as a bloody makeweight --

Rebecca and Ellie glare at each other.

LIZ
Yes, Ellie. Now let's go.

Ellie doesn't budge. Liz straddles the stream, hitches up her skirt and pees into the water.

REBECCA
What are you doing?

LIZ
What does it fucking look like? I'm
adding my pee to the eternal stream
of the Goddess.

Rebecca, Liz and Ellie laugh. Liz loses her balance and falls into the stream. Their laughter turns hysterical. Rebecca and Ellie haul Liz to her feet. Rebecca produces a cloth from her pack. Liz dries her backside then returns the cloth.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Now, where were we?

ELSEWHERE - SAME

The Green Man peers warily from behind a tree. He notes a strange bluish light among the trees. His face fills with fear. He bolts like a frightened animal.

GLADE - LATER

Rebecca, Liz and Ellie enter a clearing hedged with trees. The grass is deep and lush. Rebecca leads Liz and Ellie to three small grassy mounds.

The three women kneel by the mounds. Rebecca produces the bay leaves and a bottle of oil. Each woman in turn lays a leaf of bay in the centre of the circle then ceremoniously drips oil onto the bay leaves. Rebecca stows the bottle.

Rebecca produces three small pieces of paper. She places one on each mound. Ellie peers dubiously at the nearest one.

REBECCA

Read it... as if you mean it.

ELLIE

I'm sorry... for before.

Rebecca smiles and pecks Ellie's cheek. The three women close their eyes and hold hands. They breathe heavily, their chests rising and falling in unison as they lapse into trance. They read from the scraps of paper with dreamy voices:

REBECCA

Oh Goddess, we kneel here as your
humble servants to do your bidding
upon the hallowed earth.

LIZ

Please grant us the grace to walk
through life's labours in peace.

ELLIE

Please grant us the vision to see
with clarity when all around us is
dark and confused.

REBECCA

Please grant us your divine gifts,
oh Goddess, if our hearts' desires
merit your holy blessing.

For a moment a blue shimmer illuminates the three women. They stir out of their trances. Liz emerges with ease; Ellie seems troubled. Rebecca struggles to become present.

LIZ

Well, girls?

Ellie shakes her head. Rebecca becomes alert, eyes bright.

REBECCA

I thought I felt something.

LIZ

Like what?

ELSEWHERE - SAME

The Green Man stumbles in a blind panic through the woods.

GLADE - SAME

Rebecca shrugs. Liz rises and smiles apologetically at her.

LIZ
Well, we tried.

Rebecca emits a resigned sigh. She rises and dusts the grass off her knees. Ellie remains kneeling.

ELLIE
Just once more...

Rebecca and Liz exchange a surprised look. They resume their places in the circle. The three women hold hands, breathe in unison and slide into trance.

BLUE WOMAN, a translucent female being glowing with ethereal blue light, appears among the three women. They are oblivious of her as she opens her arms to Ellie, who smiles dreamily in return. The Blue Woman disappears.

REBECCA
Oh Goddess, we kneel here as your
humble servants to do your --

The Green Man staggers into the glade. He sees the women and emits a frightened yelp. The three women scream and rush out of the glade, bursting through foliage onto a downhill path.

The three women run through a blurred landscape of trees, sky, grass and ground. They stumble and stall. Rebecca and Liz pick themselves up in a daze. They look around and see --

Ellie lies motionless, her head against a bloodied rock.

EXT. REBECCA'S HOUSE - LATER

Liz's car sits outside. Rebecca's car stops. Rebecca and Liz emerge from it. Rebecca unlocks her house and holds the door open for Liz.

LIZ
I have to... to collect Melanie.

Rebecca hugs Liz. They burst into tears. Rebecca disappears indoors. Liz unlocks her car and gets in.

INT. LIZ'S CAR - SAME

Liz slumps in tears.

LIZ
It's so bloody senseless --

Liz's hand grabs the anger ball and kneads it violently. A translucent blue hand overlays Liz's hand and caresses it.

The Blue Woman sits in the passenger seat. Liz is oblivious of her as she strokes Liz's hair and wipes her tears away. Liz quietens. She peacefully sets down the anger ball.

INT. REBECCA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Rebecca reels in. Her eyes are red from tears, her face shows scratches from crashing through the foliage. Rebecca supports herself on the bench and cries. She stares around the kitchen at a loss. Her eyes settle on --

The wall calendar with the circled full moon.

Rebecca seizes a pen and attacks the calendar, scribbling out the full moon with vehemence. Rebecca sees the pottery piece of the three women. She flings down the pen and glares at the pottery, chest heaving and eyes on fire.

Rebecca seizes the pottery and smashes it to smithereens on the floor. She wails with pain and falls to the floor, crying amid the shards of pottery.

A translucent female light being appears beside Rebecca, her face obscured. The being kneels by Rebecca and comforts her. Rebecca tenses, sensing something. She looks up and sees --

The translucent being's face: it's Ellie, smiling brightly.

Rebecca gapes in wonder, a pale blue light reflected in the whites of her eyes. Her sobs mingle with laughs.

REBECCA

Thank you. Thank you --

EXT. WOODS - SAME

The Green Man staggers tiredly up to a tree. He slumps at its feet and curls up contentedly between its roots.

FADE OUT

BLACK SCREEN:

The sound of woodlands: birds chirp, the wind sighs.

THE END