

THE McINNIS METHOD REVIEWS · NO. 01

Obsession (2026)

What Bear Cannot See, and What It Costs Him

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The purpose of this review is not to explain the movie. It is to use the movie to better understand ourselves.

Most people leave *Obsession* describing a possession story. From a McInnis Method perspective, the possession is not the horror. It is the visible form of something that was already there. The wish does not create Bear's problem. It exposes it.

The tragedy is not that Bear cannot have the woman he loves. It is that he is so organized around his own deprivation that he has lost the ability to see her at all. His blindness is not to Nikki's feelings. It is to Nikki. Everything she tells him about her own life reaches him only through a fog, one question thick: what does this mean for me?

A NOTE ON THE SEEING

Before I go further, I want to be honest about the cost of what follows. Seeing through Bear's eyes did not come easily to me. His self-pity is the thing I have to work hardest to see past: the victimhood worn as virtue, the sense that he is owed something, because he wants it badly enough. My first response to him was to convict him, and it was fast.

I did the other work anyway, because I have never seen conviction change a man. People rarely change because someone condemns them. They usually change when they finally see something they could not see before. If we stop at conviction, we keep our moral clarity and learn nothing about how a man becomes capable of this. Understanding Bear is not a favor to Bear. It is an attempt to understand the psychology that made him possible. It does not diminish Nikki or soften the inexcusable horror of what happened to her.

I. BEFORE THE WISH

The film establishes something about Bear before the plot does. His grandmother's cat gets into her medication and dies. We are not shown exactly how it happened, and the medicine cabinet itself does not seem to close properly. What matters more is what Bear does next. Alone in the house, he asks the dead cat: how did you get into these? Then, rather than burying her, he puts her in the trash.

I don't know what Bear was responsible for before the cat died. I do know what he does afterward. He moves away from what has happened as quickly as he can. There is no burial, no ritual, no sustained contact with the loss. Nothing supernatural has happened yet, and already Bear's instinct is visible: when reality becomes painful, he moves away from contact with it.

II. WHAT SHE TOLD HIM

Every scene before the wish has the same shape. Nikki tells Bear she is unhappy at work. She tells him she wants to leave. She tells him she wants to write. She tells him she needs her life to change. She draws a distinction between romance and love that most people never bother to make out loud. She tells him that he is the only person she trusts enough to open up to. She is handing him her interior life.

Bear hears none of it. He hears what it costs him. I'll see her less. She's moving away from me. I'm losing access. Each statement she makes about her own life is converted into a statement about his standing with her. Instantly, without effort, without any awareness that a conversion has occurred.

Attention reveals organization. What a man consistently notices can tell you something important about how his life is organized. Bear believes he is organized around love. His attention suggests he is organized around the reduction of his own deprivation, and that Nikki is the proposed solution to a problem that existed long before she did.

III. THE MAN WHO WOULD DO ANYTHING

Bear believes he would do anything for Nikki. That belief is sincere. It is also the exact mechanism by which he cannot see what he is doing to her. If you asked him whether he was being selfish, the question would sound absurd to him. He would die for this woman. And in the meantime he offers her nothing. Not attention. Not curiosity. Not one question about her life that isn't secretly a question about his position in it.

The imagined sacrifice is total. The actual offering is zero.

From what the film shows us, I would call this entitlement, and it is worth being precise, because entitlement rarely feels like entitlement from the inside. From the inside it feels like devotion. It feels like having loved someone longer and more faithfully than anyone else did, and being owed something for the loyalty. A man in this position is not aware of demanding anything. He experiences himself as giving, endlessly, invisibly, without return.

So watch what he actually gives. He watches her. He scrolls. He waits. He rehearses. The devotion never once takes the form of a cost he bears in the present. He cannot even be present with her, because he is fixed on an imagined future.

IV. WHAT THE WISH REMOVES

Note what he does not wish for. He does not wish to become a man Nikki could love. He wishes for Nikki to love him. The solution points outward, at her, and never once inward, at himself.

And the wish removes neither distance nor circumstance nor a rival. It removes her choice, which, in his mind, is the one obstacle that was never legitimate in the first place. People can preserve desire by trying to reorganize reality instead of allowing reality to revise what they want, expect, or do. Bear cannot tolerate the possibility that Nikki might not choose him, so rather than grieve that possibility, he deletes it.

In the film he does this supernaturally. Outside the film, the same move is quieter but familiar. We become indispensable so someone cannot leave. We rescue instead of relating. We spend more energy trying to secure another person's choice than becoming someone worth freely choosing. One path accepts the cost of letting reality change what you do. The other refuses that cost by asking reality to rearrange itself instead.

V. WHERE THE EXPLANATION STOPS

Everything above is an account of how Bear became unable to see her. It is an explanation. It is not a defense, and the film marks the precise moment it stops being available to him.

He learns that the real Nikki is trapped inside her own body, awake and suffering. He is told this plainly, over the phone: he chose it for her, and she is in agony. Everything the fog once let him filter, every signal from her that he had been converting into a fact about himself, can no longer be converted. Once Bear knows the real Nikki is trapped, there is no fog left to hide in. He is no longer failing to see her. He is refusing to act.

Blindness can explain the first act. It does not explain what follows. Once Bear knows the truth, explanation has reached its limit and responsibility remains.

The McInnis Method refuses the false choice between understanding and accountability. One does not weaken the other.

VI. WHAT I DO NOT KNOW ABOUT HIM

If Bear walked into my office, I would want to know things this film does not tell us. He is living in his dead grandmother's house, with her cat, weeks or months after she died. That is the only piece of his history we are given, and it is not nothing. Was he her caretaker? Did anyone ever attend to him? Has he ever had a self to give from, or did he learn early that his job was to absorb and not to need?

If Bear learned somewhere that his own needs were dangerous or irrelevant, deprivation might help explain part of what we see. But the film does not give us enough to know. That is a possibility I would investigate, not a conclusion I would bring into the room.

I would want the answers. I would work with the man who gave them. But therapy has its own bias. The more coherent a person's story becomes, the easier it is to mistake explanation for absolution. So let me hold two things at once and refuse to collapse them.

There may be a real reason Bear cannot see Nikki. There is no reason that makes Nikki's experience at his hands one degree less than what it was.

Both of those are true. Neither cancels the other. Most of the argument surrounding this film is an attempt to make one of them go away, to explain him until he isn't culpable, or to convict him until he isn't human. Refusing that trade is not fence-sitting. It is the actual work, and it is harder than either side of it.

VII. HE IS SHOWN, AND HE DOES NOT MOVE

One more observation, and it is the one I keep returning to.

The question is no longer whether Bear understands. The question is whether understanding costs him anything. The real Nikki surfaces and begs him to end her suffering. His answer is: "What's so bad about being with me?" Even now, his attention returns to what her agony implies about him. The answer is that the question itself is the answer. Even confronted with her deepest suffering, he cannot stop making her experience about himself.

This matters more than any verdict. In my work, what matters most is not where someone begins, but what they do once reality becomes available to them. Seeing what has been organizing your life can create a choice that wasn't available before. What happens next tells us more. Bear is given that opportunity repeatedly, with escalating clarity, and does nothing with it. That is not a man who could not see. That is a man who was shown, and declined.

VIII. THE ENDING

The wish did not make Bear stop seeing Nikki. It revealed how long he had already been looking past her. Every hope, dream, fear, and longing she shared had already passed through a single filter: what does this mean for me?

Bear's tragedy was never that he wanted Nikki. It was that every solution he imagined left him unchanged. He never learned to encounter her as a separate person. Long before the wish, he had already traded the real Nikki for the one in his head.

The supernatural did not create that blindness. It made it impossible to ignore. The greatest danger of obsession is not that you love someone too much. It is that you slowly stop seeing them at all, and then keep going anyway.

Where curiosity ends, projection begins.