

THE BEAR TRAP

EXT. A GLADE BY A PATH IN THE FOREST - SPRING - DAY

PETE, a Jack Russell Terrier, runs along the path towards the glade.

In the glade, under a large tree FRANK (40), wearing sneakers, summer trousers and a short-sleeve shirt buttoned to the top, prepares a rope with a noose thrown over the lowest branch.

Directly under the noose is the trunk of a large, long-fallen tree, and beside it on the ground, Frank's rucksack.

Frank climbs onto the tree-trunk and checks the height of the noose.

Frank gets down from the trunk, takes the end of the rope and looks up to the sky.

FRANK
Forgive me!

Pete runs up to Frank wagging his tail, and Frank notices him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Get lost!

Pete happily wags his tail.

Frank ties the end of the rope to another tree, turns around and walks back to the tree-trunk under the noose, while Pete continues to watch him, wagging his tail.

Frank claps his hands at Pete.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Get lost, I said!

Pete sits in front of Frank and looks up at him, still hoping he will play with him.

Frank sits on the trunk under the noose, undoes the top two buttons of his shirt and looks at Pete.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You want to watch?

Pete continues to gaze at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Fine! It doesn't bother me.

Frank unzips the rucksack. He takes out an expensive Cuban cigar, a lighter and a small metal ashtray with a lid and puts them on the trunk next to him, then takes out a carefully packed sandwich, takes the plastic wrap off and starts to eat.

Pete looks at Frank and licks his lips. Frank savors every mouthful, ignoring the dog.

There is only a single bite of the sandwich left when Frank looks at Pete and then throws him the remaining piece.

Frank crumples up the sandwich wrapper and puts it in his rucksack.

Pete looks at Frank, licks his lips and wags his tail.

Frank looks thoughtfully at Pete.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I can't do it with you watching.
You've got to go. Understand?

ANGIE (12) runs breathlessly up the path. She has pretty long fair hair, blue eyes and is wearing a Scouts' uniform. She stops in front of Frank with a tennis ball in one hand and rests, both hands on her knees.

ANGIE

Thank God! Thanks for stopping him
sir! I couldn't have run any more.

Frank looks at Angie, taken aback and a little annoyed that she and Pete have interrupted his plans.

Angie, still out of breath, sits on the ground and shows the ball to the puppy.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Pete, here!

Pete happily bounds over to Angie.

Angie gathers up the dog and cuddles it.

Frank lights the cigar and takes a long, satisfying drag.

Angie looks at Frank expecting some kind of response, but Frank still says nothing.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I'm Angie, and this is Pete, my
naughty dog.

Frank takes the ashtray, lifts the lid and puts it down on the trunk next to him.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

He's a Jack Russell, he's like a baby. My brother and me are camping with our Dad, and Pete ran off after a squirrel. I thought I'd never catch him. If it wasn't for you...

Frank finally speaks.

FRANK

It'll be dark soon.

ANGIE

Dark is all part of nature. Scouts aren't scared of the dark!

Frank carefully taps the ash off into the ashtray and again takes an intense drag of the cigar.

Angie spots the noose above Frank's head.

Frank notices that Angie is looking at the noose.

FRANK

It's a bear trap.

ANGIE

For bears?

Frank carefully taps the ash off the cigar into the ashtray.

FRANK

Yes. For a special kind of bear!

Angie puts Pete down and shows him the ball.

Pete joyfully wags his tail.

Angie throws the ball some ten meters down the path and the dog happily races after it.

ANGIE

I've never met a bear hunter before!

Frank is getting a little irritable now, but tries not to be harsh with Angie.

FRANK

If I were you I would hurry back to your camp. The bear'll be here any minute.

Pete runs up to Frank with the ball in his mouth, drops it at Frank's feet and looks playfully at him, expecting him to throw it again.

Frank looks uncertainly at the dog, then takes the ball and throws it down the path.

Pete bounds gleefully after it.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Listen...

Frank takes another drag of smoke.

FRANK (CONT'D)

...you interrupted me in the middle of a very important job. Why don't you run along back to your camp site?

ANGIE

But will he die when he falls into that trap of yours?

Frank looks Angie in the eye. They look at each other silently for a few moments and then Frank nods.

A GIRL's laughter is suddenly heard.

Frank leaps to his feet in panic.

FRANK

Quick! We have to hide!

Angie looks at Frank in confusion.

ANGIE

Why?

Frank looks at her sternly. Angie offers him her hand and Frank leads her over the tree-trunk.

Both sit on the ground with their backs to the tree trunk. Just as they have sat down Frank leaps up as though scalded, remembering the rucksack he has left on the other side of the tree trunk. He takes it and sits back down next to Angie.

Frank puts the cigar out on the ground and places it in his shirt pocket.

A girl (20), laughing, runs down the path, with a YOUNG MAN (20) in pursuit.

GIRL
Catch me if you can!

YOUNG MAN
And if I catch you?

GIRL
There's a reward in it for you!

The girl and the young man run happily past along the path, further into the woods, enjoying their game.

Frank and Angie stay sitting silently against the tree trunk.

ANGIE
It looks like you won't be catching that bear today.

FRANK
Of course I will!

ANGIE
Bears don't do any harm, you know, why do you want to...

FRANK
Look kid, this bear has been very irresponsible towards his family...

ANGIE
What does irresponsible mean?

Frank frowns.

FRANK
It means he lost his job. It means he couldn't buy his kids a Playstation or bikes, and he didn't have the money to take them to Disneyland!

ANGIE
But bear cubs don't go to Disneyland.

FRANK
Believe me, these ones really wanted to go to Disneyland but their father couldn't afford it. He can't find a new job.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)
He's embarassed his family and
doesn't deserve to live.

Frank pauses for a second.

FRANK (CONT'D)
He deserves to die.

Frank stands up, takes the cigar out of his pocket and
relights it.

Pete runs up to the tree-trunk with the ball in his mouth,
looks at Frank and wags his tail.

Frank, annoyed at having to play with the dog, climbs over
the tree trunk, picks up the ball and flings it as far as he
can, then sits on the trunk and takes a drag.

Angie climbs over the fallen tree and sits next to Frank.

ANGIE
Aren't you sad to leave his
children as orphans?

FRANK
What are you, a scout or a
therapist?

Frank sits back down on the log, trying to fight back the
irritation Angie and her dog are causing him, and sucks hard
again on the cigarette.

ANGIE
I've never been to Disneyland but I
still love my Dad lots and I would
really miss him if he got caught in
a trap like this.

Frank closes his eyes and hangs his head.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Maybe that bear of yours isn't to
blame for what happened to him?

Frank lifts his head, opens his eyes and twiddles the cigar
with his fingers.

FRANK
Listen, here's what's going to
happen. YOU are going to leave now
and I am going to stay!

ANGIE

No! YOU are going to take down that trap and then you are taking me for ice-cream.

A tear rolls down Frank's face.

FRANK

I'm not a hunter, I just want everything to be alright.

ANGIE

I know. Look at me.

Frank looks at Angie.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Frank looks at the noose above his head, then at Angie, and smiles.

FRANK

Look, Angie, it's not quite as simple as you think...

Angie wipes the tear from Frank's face.

Frank stubs out the cigar on the tree and puts it in his shirt pocket, closes the lid of the little ashtray and places it back in his rucksack along with the cigar and the lighter.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm not sure this is such a good idea...

ANGIE

Just listen to your heart.

FRANK

You learn all sorts in those Scouts of yours, don't you!

Frank gets up from the tree trunk, looks at the noose above his head and walks over to the tree to which he tied the other end of the rope.

He unties the rope, pulls it down from the tree and throws it in a nearby bush.

FRANK (CONT'D)

There you go, no more bear trap!

Frank turns towards Angie, but where Angie had been standing there is now no-one to be seen.

Frank, taken aback, starts to look around for Angie.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Angie! Angie, where are you?

Frank leaps over the log and continues hunting around for Angie.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Pete, come here boy! Pete!

Frank looks around for Pete and then looks down at the path in front of him and sees the tennis ball the dog had been playing with, stoops down and picks it up.

Frank looks at the ball in his hand with a smile.

He sighs deeply, hoists his rucksack onto his back and sets off down the path.

He stops for a moment, turns towards the big tree and looks to the sky.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Thanks... Angie!