

DEERSTALKER

Horror Short Film

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Draft 9

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1. EXT. WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON

FADE IN:

The woods are still and silent.

It's unnaturally quiet.

The sound of nature creeps in.

Birds start to chirp and chatter.

Warm sunlight breaks through the treetops.

Close by, the call of a man echoes through the woods.

DISTANT VOICE

JOEY!!

2. EXT. MEADOW - CONTINUOUS

Beyond the woods is a vast meadow with tall, dry grass stretching into the distance. The wind is calm yet strong.

DEAN emerges from the edge of the wood, only a speck in the distance.

He stops and calls out, desperation in his voice.

DEAN

JOEY!!

No response. He continues his trek down the slope.

3. EXT. MEADOW - MOMENTS LATER

After a short while, something grabs his attention.

A faint, distant clinking sound, like that of a dog's tag.

Dean looks to its source: a copse [a small group of trees] further down the hill.

4. EXT. MEADOW - COPSE - MOMENTS LATER

Outside the copse, Dean approaches a small opening in the bushes, some kind of animal trail.

He looks down at the dirt. There's small paw prints leading inside.

Dean hears the chiming coming from within, unmistakably a dog's tag.

DEAN

JOEY!!

No response.

He enters.

5. EXT. THE DEN - CONTINUOUS

Dean shuffles through the brambles. Branches scrape against his coat.

He clears the thicket and brushes down his body.

He trudges through the undergrowth towards a clearing at the centre of the area.

It's eerily quiet inside. There are no birds or insects to be heard, completely absent of wildlife.

The chiming noise is here, louder, somewhere. He's getting closer to the source. It compels him.

It sounds strange, continuous like dangling chains or wind chimes.

DEAN

Joey! Come here, boy!

As he approaches the clearing, the chiming dies away with the wind.

One last time, he calls out.

DEAN

JOEY!!

He looks all around him.

No response.

He rubs the side of his head, tired and hopeless.

The wind picks up.

The chiming returns, directly above him.

He looks up and behind, to an old oak.

He shudders.

DEAN

Joey?

It's Joey.

A Border Collie with a red collar.

Hooked on the fork of the tree.

Dead.

Dean picks up a long branch laying nearby. He raises it up like a spear and nudges at Joey's shoulder.

He waits for any sign of life.

Nothing. Joey just dangles like a slab of meat.

With two hands, Dean wedges the branch under Joey's blood-stained stomach and prises her off.

Time seems to slow down. He watches his dog plummet to the ground.

THUD.

In the silence, the impact is thunderous, like a tree crashing to the forest floor.

Dean falls to his knees beside his friend.

He inspects the tag on his collar.

There's an engraving of a little kangaroo.

He lifts Joey to his chest and embraces him. He rocks back and forth in a comforting motion.

Together, they sit for a while.

6. EXT. THE DEN - CONTINUOUS

Dean kneels on the ground, with Joey's head resting on his shoulder.

DEAN
(whispering)
Who did this to you?

His gaze drifts to the trunk of the tree.

The bark bares huge claw marks.

Suddenly, he hears a muffled sound.

Something is stirring underground. Crawling through tunnels in the earth.

It rapidly gets closer.

Now, it's directly beneath Dean's feet.

He startles and trips to the ground.

The sound travels behind him a short distance away to a small hole in a large mound of dirt.

The mouth of a burrow.

Beneath the entrance, it stops.

Dirt crumbles.

Dust settles.

Silence follows.

Dean is still.

Staring.

There's a strange noise coming from inside.

Whispering.

Intertwined with growling.

Like a cryptic animal language.

The noise stops.

Dean waits.

Then.

He creeps back.

Kneels down next to Joey.

And begins to lift him up.

Dirt crumbles.

He looks up.

A HEAD IS PEEKING OUT OF THE HOLE.

STARING HIM DOWN.

BARING ITS FANGS.

Dean gasps.

He drops Joey.

Scrambles to his feet.

And bolts back the way he came.

7. EXT. MEADOW - MOMENTS LATER

Dean bursts from the thicket.

Birds are singing and calling all around him.

He dashes through the dense tall grass back up the hill.

Constantly checking over his shoulder.

Gradually, he slows down and comes to a stop.

Wide in the open.

He leans on his knees, breathing heavily.

And looks towards the den.

DEAN

What do I do!? Oh God! What do I
do!?

He rubs his head.

He quickly retracts it.

Revealing red all over his face.

He looks at his hands.

They're covered in Joey's blood.

He quivers.

He frantically swats at his face with his sleeves.

Smearing blood on his jacket.

In his distress, the sound of nature begins to fade.

The birds go quiet. One by one.

Even the insects stop chirping.

Until there's nothing.

As if they all went into hiding.

Dean is still.

Paralysed with fear.

His eyes wide full of terror.

Listening.

Waiting.

He looks all around him.
His breathing becomes frantic.
He loses his balance.
He darts from one spot to the next.
But there's nowhere to run to.
He sinks into the long grass.
And disappears.

8. EXT. MEADOW - CONTINUOUS

Dean crouched in the grass.
Trembling.
He whips his head in one direction.
Then another.
Then another.
Everything is shrouded in darkness.
He puts his head down.
Closes his eyes.
And waits.
Listening.
Praying.
All is quiet.
Until.
Dean hears something.
A familiar clinking noise.
It was Joey's collar.
Getting closer.
Closer.
Until it's directly in behind him.
And stops.
Dean hears nothing.

He waits for a moment.

Then, he begins to turn his head.

Little by little.

More.

More.

Then.

Something creeps into view.

Covered in grey hair.

Inches away.

DEAN GASPS

HE JOLTS HIS HEAD AWAY.

HE BRACES FOR AN ATTACK.

But nothing happens.

Silence.

A bird begins to sing.

It's followed by another. And more.

Once more, Dean turns slowly turns.

Looks over his shoulder.

The thing was gone.

He looks down.

Something was laying on the ground.

It was Joey.

FADE TO BLACK