

THE GIRL

by

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FADE IN:

WHITE

We are looking straight down on a dead ptarmigan, blending perfectly with even snow.

Laboured breathing from a great distance fades in through the silence.

The sound approaches us rapidly, a galloping rhythm.

Suddenly the top of a brown Canadian Inuit dog comes in view and rests above the ptarmigan.

While it hovers over the dead bird it lowers its head some, and its audible breathing turns to sniffing. Then, picks the bird up and runs out of view.

SNOWY MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY

The dog lopes straight toward us, two dozen yards away, but we cannot hear it except a sound of some nearby footsteps as they approach behind us, until some time-

They overtake us, and a short parka clad person -- fully covered in variety of animal skins -- trudges toward the running beast.

The dog reaches the person quite fast.

Stops, head looking up at its master.

The person's gloved hand grabs the bird out of the dog's mouth and pulls it before it for inspection.

The dog sits.

Silence.

The person's hand comes into view with the bird and drops it. The dog's eyes follow the motion, tongue out, huffing.

The person takes another beat before walking out toward the mountain range.

The dog lowers its snout over the bird and sniffs, faintly, then turns to its master and follows.

SNOWY PINE TREE - DAY

Brown eyes -- no white in them -- and pale face hide behind it, wonderingly.

They move away.

PINE FOREST - CONTINUOUS

We see a long dark haired and nude, indigenous GIRL (10) crouched behind the tree, round belly, crawling softly away to another nearby.

Just a few feet away, a ptarmigan is looking at her.

She rests, eyes locked on the bird.

The bird stares for a beat. The girl grunts quietly, awkwardly.

It moves some audibly, turns away from the girl.

She scopes behind the pine tree, grunts again. She lowers a hand over the snow and presses down.

The bird does not turn to look.

She huffs rapidly, quietly, for a beat, lowers her other hand over the snow and as she presses down on it, from behind her we see the figure of a canine racing toward us.

A moment of its traverse and we can make out that it is the dog from earlier.

She bares her teeth at the ptarmigan off screen -- looking straight at us.

Now at a distance of few yards, the sound of the canine fades in and immediately the girl cranes her head back, seeing it run toward us.

And just a beat after it overtakes her position, still straight, then disappears off screen. The girl's eyes follow.

The bird wings off the snow escaping the dog's approach. The dog bays at it as it slows down to a stop.

The girl snarls at the baying dog, but it does not quiet, wholly consumed by the flying bird.

She snarls louder with a sudden shrill bark.

The dog turns, cuts its baying.

She snarls affronted ending in a bark.

The dog barks back, even as furiously.

Her bark attempts to dominate the canine's. Suddenly we see behind her, from the same direction which the dog had arrived, a short figure emerge over the dog's path.

It trudges unhurried, and becomes quite clear now that it is the parka clad person. She continues barking at the dog, it doing the same.

Though close to the girl now, the person is unheard above the clamor. The hood of the parka hangs slightly over the face, affording no visibility of it. We make out barely both gloves being removed. Bare hands.

The girl's flushed face drools with each roar. Just a dozen feet away, the person slows the steps for stealth, advancing a foot at once.

The girl stops barking and instantly the person halts. The dog bays off screen rhythmically.

A beat.

Suddenly the person leaps into the air and pins her down. We hear the sound of the bird flying away.

The person's bare hands wrap around the girl's throat and begin choking her with sharp jerking motions. A mix of croak and cry plays over the baying of the dog. The girl's arms flail insanely.

The person maintains an inescapable grip. The girl's flailing arms turn over snow spraying in every direction. In turn unearthing mud which too flings in every direction.

The person pivots the girl's head back and we see a thick red -- thick as syrup -- oozing from her mouth, as with the sharp jerks, it swings back and forth a bit.

Now waterfalls down to snow and accumulates such that it forms a shiny coat.

The girl's croaks and flailing arms are no more. The person, however, maintains the grip for a beat longer than needful.

The dog bays without rest off screen.

Person releases both hands, fully covered in blood, and the girl's head plashes into the blood below. The person exhales.

The person stares at the hands for a beat then looks up at the dog and whistles a bird-like, yet awkward sound.

The dog hushes off screen.

The person looks down at the blood again but this time brings one hand under the hood.

A beat.

It moves out and we see the forefinger wiped clean.

MOUNTAIN RANGE - EVENING

The person trudges laboriously through the snow covered terrain with a thick rope pulled over one shoulder dragging the naked body of the girl, tied at the neck. The sun is setting. The dog follows behind the corpse of the girl.

CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The person sits on a log next to a makeshift campfire made out of dead leaves and twigs. The person holds a stick over the flame with something small impaled at the end of it.

It catches a flame and the person quickly pulls it back. It's somewhat darkened and roasted but it is clearly an ear.

Beside the fire lies the dog, peeling remnants of flesh off a rather bare skull. Dark wisps scattered underneath the skull.

The person brings the end of the stick under the hood.

It pulls it out, the ear gone. Audible chewing.

The person turns toward the dog, looking below us. It grabs a hold of the drooped hood with one hand and peels it back revealing the same face of the girl, chewing.

She swallows.

She chews again.

CUT TO:

BLACK

TITLE: "9 months later"

Labored moans and grunts BURST.

Quiet down to rapid breaths and then-

An agonized cry.

CUT TO:

RIVER - SPRING - DAY

We see the girl from behind, covered in weather appropriate animal skins, sitting Indian style on the willows, beside the slow moving river. The dog lies beside her. She rocks back and forth some.

GIRL

She stares across the river calm faced. A newborn lies covered in animal skins in her crossed arms sucking from a bare bosom.

Birds whistle as they fly by.

CLOSER

Her lips whisper just barely in her native tongue. Her face, pale and vacant.

Off screen the newborn slips a grunt. She stops.

Her head shifts down.

It's sucking still, eyes closed, palm on bosom. No worry.

She gives it a stare.

BLUE SKY - DAY

Thick clouds move through the sky.

The girl, nude, rests on her crossed arms over the grass looking straight up with a gentle smile. Her belly is round.

She tilts her head up to see behind her-

The girl with animal skins, identical in height and appearance, sits on the grass and is busy tearing the carcass of a bloody ptarmigan with a native tool. She too has a round belly.

The nude girl's smile grows. In native tongue:

NUDE GIRL
(subtitled)
Mama.

The girl looks up.

NUDE GIRL (CONT'D)
...What's my name?

She stops tearing the carcass.

Just then -- as if on cue -- the dog is alerted: head jerks up and ears erect.

The girl turns in the same direction as the dog.

The willows shake with the light wind and a noise disturbs one portion of them. The sun gives them a yellow tinge.

The girl gets up and heads for the willows. The dog follows behind.

The noises stop as the girl approaches closer now.

She bends down and parts the willows with a hand. A headless ptarmigan, bloody.

Suddenly the nearby noise of RUSTLING and the quick pacing as it darts away, running through the thick willows along the bank, shaking them vigorously.

Then the movement in the willows stops. The girl stares intently.

A brown silky shape rises slowly through the willows.

She reacts with a measured squint.

The shape rises suddenly now and we see it is the head of a girl identical in appearance to the one staring back, blood and feathers smeared over its mouth like an infant, bearing her teeth straight at us.

The head drops into the willows and she breaks speedily through them into the horizon.

The girl's head drops back to the ptarmigan. Her hand withdraws and she moves back to her daughter.

NUDE GIRL (CONT'D)

What is it, Mama?

The girl sits down beside the torn ptarmigan.

She grabs her tool and continues work on it.

GIRL

...A beast.

A beat.

NUDE GIRL

...Why do beasts prowl, Mama?

The girl is not stalled by the question, cutting fixedly at the bird.

GIRL
...I don't know.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Inside lie under a blanket the girl and her daughter, the naked girl, in near pitch darkness. Crickets chirp nearby.

NUDE GIRL

Eyes closed, her face tenses, convulses, sparsely-
With a peculiar growl-like snore.

She wakes, listens to the nearby sounds of the crickets.
Susurrous sounds lightly fade in and out.

The nude girl twists her head, looking straight up at the tent.

Those same sounds, on fade in, now resemble a whisper.

A beat.

She sits up, looks to her mother, sleeping.

Nothing but the crickets.

The whisper, though soft, now a perceptive gurgling sound with a click in between "Tuh-k. Tuh-k".

The girl smiles faintly. She moves closer to the wall of the tent and slowly presses her ear against it.

"Tuh-k. Tuh-k"

She smiles wide, quickly stands up, steps over her mother, and exits the tent with only tiny sounds.

WILLOWS - NIGHT

A nude, long haired humanoid with its back toward us runs into the willows by the bank.

NUDE GIRL

She stands beside the tent, nude also. A hybrid cry of an ape and wolf in the distance.

The movement in the willows halts.

The nude girl runs on her toes toward the willows, eyes moving back and forth between ground and the assumed position of the humanoid figure. Another hybrid cry, this time much farther away, possibly a mile.

The girl, en route, cranes her head back toward us cautiously, presumably at the tent she departed. In the far background emerges the creature.

The girl turns back, but just then the creature drops into the willows and begins parting them in its run.

The darts for the willows, a smile on her face. The hybrid cry, nearby, sounds.

RIVER - NIGHT

We are at a section just where it forks a stream, thinning out.

The girl lies on her belly hidden some in the willows, looking. She is peering out into the section where the water is no more.

From the same side of the bank as the girl projects the head of the creature, as if hiding inside a hole. It cranes its head in the direction of the girl.

She squints her eyes trying to make out its appearance, but the abundance of unkempt hair masks her face, even the moon offers no visibility.

The creature retreats into the presumed hole.

The girl's cue. She crawls on her knees ever so gently avoiding as much noise as possible.

The creature's head projects very slowly, looking with only an eye.

The girl, closer now, sees this and stops. The creature retreats.

The girl rests.

Nothing from the hole.

She begins her slow crawl again, the willows making a light hissing noise with every advance.

As each palm rises and descends upon ground, mud sags off.

The girl's eyes are fixed on nothing but the presumed hole.

Nothing from the hole.

She is about eight feet away now.

Nothing from the hole.

She stops and peaks out of the willows toward the clearing just above the thinning stream.

Nothing from the hole.

She jumps to the ground and waits for a good beat.

The hole is slightly visible now, dark and about three feet in height. But no movement from it.

The girl crawls towards it, keeping her eyes rigidly on the pitch black hole.

HOLE

She crawls a bit further and cranes her head upward to see inside.

A beat.

She crawls inside the hole, disappearing completely.

BLACK

We hear light breaths.

Then we see a light far away, seemingly like that of a burning torch.

We approach it.

It grows bigger.

And bigger.

And bigger.

Until it becomes clear to us that it is in fact a torch. And its illumination shows that we are in a very narrow cave, dirt walls all around, and to the right of the torch, the cave bends.

We now see the face of the nude girl, moist and sweating some, mud smeared in several places.

She makes a turn at the torch and sees another straight ahead.

She crawls to it, panting and sweating. A rapid sound, like that of a whale begins a slow fade in.

But eventually reaches it. The sound is not more readily understood as chanting.

And at this torch she makes yet another turn.

Another torch straight ahead. The sound grows louder. It is now clear that it is chanting.

She struggles through her crawling, panting and sweating with every breath.

She stops.

She smiles, and then begins to crawl again, still laboriously though.

At the torch, the chanting must be just feet away from her as there is some roaring to it.

She turns around the corner of the tunnel to see that she has arrived in some underground room, burning torches all around. At the center the figure of an ape figure with the head of a ptarmigan. And just below a dozen girls identical in appearance to her.

She reacts.

They chant: Tuh-k. Tuh-k.