

The Beast of Ape Canyon

By

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FADE IN

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

A small Winnebago cruises down the road, winding its way through the thick forest. Underneath a clear blue sky Mount Saint Helens is seen towering on the horizon.

INT. WINNEBAGO - CONTINUOUS

JAMES TURNER, 30s, rugged-looking, drives the motor home. He wears a T-shirt depicting a bald eagle flying in front of an American flag.

CAROLINE TURNER, 30s, a regular southern belle, sits passenger side. She wears a red, white and blue sundress.

She holds an open road map that she looks at it for a beat, then chucks behind her.

CAROLINE

It's useless.

JAMES

Stop worrying. I know where we are.

CAROLINE

Yeah? Where's that?

JAMES

(smiles)

Washington.

CAROLINE

(rolls eyes)

July fourth at your brother's was tiring enough. Now I've got to spend the weekend roughing it with you boys? Why'd I let y'all drag me out here?

ROBBIE(O.S.)

Cause we have to find Bigfoot.

ROBBIE TURNER, 8, an excitable boy. He has a scar above his left eye. He sits at a small table in the motor home reading a book called "The Search for Sasquatch".

CAROLINE

Honey, if I wanted to spend the weekend with some hairy ape man we would've stayed at your uncle's.

JAMES

Hey!

James gives her a tweak and she slaps him away, grinning.

ROBBIE

Come on, Mom. We could get famous.
There's probably a bunch of
Bigfoots where we're going.

JAMES

Of course there are. Just look at
the name. *Ape Canyon?*

CAROLINE

(to James)

I bet you'd fit in well there.

James scratches his armpit and purses his lips, doing his
best monkey impression.

CAROLINE

Oh Lord, help me.

Caroline hits the radio dial. Country music blasts out.

EXT. INDIAN CRAFTS STORE - LATER

KWATOKO, an old Native American man sits in a chair on the
porch of his "Indian Crafts Store". The wrinkles on his face
are long and deep. His eyes clouded by cataracts.

Beside him sits a cage with two baby eagles inside. The
eaglets chirp up at him.

Kwatoko opens a small box beside the cage and pulls out a
dead rat. He takes out a knife and cuts two bits of meat
from the rat's body.

He drops the rat meat into the cage piece by piece. The baby
eagles feed.

Kwatoko smiles down at them. Then hears...

The sounds of COUNTRY MUSIC and a WINNEBAGO ENGINE, as the
motor home comes cruising down the road.

The Winnebago pulls into the parking lot. Kwatoko puts the
rat away and pulls a blanket over the cage.

The Turner family exits the motor home.

James stretches and takes in the beautiful day before turning to Kwatoko.

JAMES
Hey there!

Kwatoko nods acknowledgment.

JAMES
My son needs to go to the bathroom.
You have one he can use?

KWATOKO
Yes. But, you must purchase.

Kwatoko motions to a rack on the porch. Draped on it are blankets, quilts, and shawls.

James turns to Robbie.

JAMES
You sure you can't pee on a tree?

Robbie shakes his head, "no".

JAMES
Alright.

Robbie bounds up the steps and disappears inside.

James and Caroline follow to the porch.

JAMES
(to Caroline)
Go ahead and pick something out.

Caroline moves to the rack and begins perusing the goods.

JAMES
(to Kwatoko)
Are there any gas stations nearby?

KWATOKO
A few miles down. Just before the
fork. Where are you headed?

JAMES
Ape Canyon. Gonna camp out there
tonight and move on to Saint Helens
in the morning.

KWATOKO

I wouldn't do that. There's a lot of wildlife that way. It does no good to disturb it.

JAMES

My kid's got it in his head that we're gonna find Bigfoot...

KWATOKO

He's an adventurer I see.

Kwatoko traces his finger above his left eye.

JAMES

Oh, the scar? Yeah that's an old playground injury. He likes to push himself as far as possible.

KWATOKO

You should go to the Ape Caves instead. Plenty of stories for the young one, but people, not animals, there to deal with.

JAMES

How do you get there?

KWATOKO

Just take the West road instead of East when you come to the fork. You see signs.

Robbie exits the store.

JAMES

Guess what? I think we got a lead on Bigfoot.

ROBBIE

Well, what are we waiting for?

JAMES

(to Caroline)

You ready?

Caroline looks between two shawls. After a beat she grabs one and heads over. The chosen shawl is red and blue. The woven pattern depicts a bird, a mountain, and a tiny man.

CAROLINE

I'll take this one. I like that hawk design.

KWATOKO
That's an eagle. A Thunderbird to
be more accurate.

JAMES
Like the car?

KWATOKO
No. Like the ancient native legend.

Kwatoko takes the shawl.

KWATOKO
Nearly every native tribe told
stories about a large bird, or
birds that were said to be the
cause of thunderstorms.

He points out the images as he speaks. Caroline and Robbie
lean in, interested. James fumbles for his wallet.

KWATOKO
The tribes in this area said it
lived inside the mountain and
watched over them. They saw it as a
protective force. Some tribes spoke
of their ability to transform
humans into birds. Others said the
Thunderbird themselves could take
human form. There are as many
different legends about Thunderbird
as there are tribes.

ROBBIE
Cool.

James pulls out some cash and fans it out in front of him.

JAMES
How much?

Kwatoko plucks a twenty out with his fingers.

KWATOKO
That much.

James shoots him a skeptical look. Caroline takes the shawl.

JAMES
And thanks for the advice.

Kwatoko gives James a nod. The Turners head back to the
motor home.

INT. WINNEBAGO - LATER

The Winnebago cruises through the forest. Caroline wears the eagle shawl. Sunlight streams through the windshield.

James grabs a pair of sunglasses clipped to the visor and slips them on.

JAMES

Alright, we've got five hundred miles in the tank and we're coming up on the fork here.

(to Robbie)

You ready to hear that old guy's Bigfoot tip?

Robbie, who sits in the back reading, looks up excitedly.

ROBBIE

What is it?

JAMES

Apparently there's this place called Ape Cave. People think Bigfoot lives there. Sounds like a good place to start the search.

Robbie shakes his head.

ROBBIE

No, I already read about that place. There's no Bigfoots there. It's just for tourists. We're not chumps, Dad.

James and Caroline smile at each other.

CAROLINE

I hate to break it you, but we can't camp out there. There's too many animals and it's out in the middle of nowhere.

ROBBIE

We don't have to camp. We can just look around. Just for a little bit, please. Come on. You said...

He looks on the verge of tears.

JAMES

(to Caroline)

I suppose we could just walk around there for awhile.

Robbie perks up.

CAROLINE

(to Robbie)

And what happens if you do find
Bigfoot, eh? He's pretty big.

ROBBIE

I don't know. Dad'll get it.

JAMES

Yep. I got it covered. I got a
hunting knife, a flare gun.... a
big net.

CAROLINE

That's a mosquito net.

JAMES

I'm prepared.

Caroline gives up and turns to the window.

ROBBIE

Awesome! Maybe we'll even see a
Thunderbird too.

JAMES

I don't know. That one sounds like
a lot of hokum to me, son.

ROBBIE

Why?

JAMES

He said Thunderbird was supposed to
protect the Indians, right. Well
look what happened to them.
Thunderbird sure as heck didn't
protect any native tribes from
small pox.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

The Winnebago comes to the fork. There's a Westbound sign
and an Eastbound sign. It takes the east fork.

EXT. END OF ROAD - LATER

The Winnebago sits at the end of the road. Beyond the road is a large plain leading to a shallow riverbed. The cliffs of the canyon stand just beyond the riverbed, partially shrouded by trees. Mount Saint Helens looms over all.

Beside the Winnebago, Caroline helps James strap on a backpack. Robbie bursts out of the home and into the field.

JAMES

Don't get too far ahead!

Robbie doesn't slow up one bit.

JAMES

Come on. We're gonna lose him.

EXT. RIVERBED - MOMENTS LATER

James and Caroline reach the shallow riverbed just as Robbie comes to the treeline beyond it.

JAMES

Robbie wait for us!

Robbie motions them to hurry and disappears into the trees.

JAMES

Damn it.

The water is about ankle deep and twenty feet from shore to shore. James and Caroline begin wading through it.

CAROLINE

I shouldn't have worn flip-flops.

Caroline slips without falling and lets out a yelp.

JAMES

Are you ok?

CAROLINE

My foot's caught under something.

James stoops down and feels around under the current.

ROBBIE(O.S.)

Hey! I found something!

James and Caroline look up. Robbie stands on a cliff ledge behind some dried shrubs. He waves his hands in the air.

JAMES
GET DOWN FROM THERE NOW!

Robbie disappears again. James turns back to Caroline.

JAMES
We should've gone to the caves.

As James works on her foot, Caroline gazes into the sky.

CAROLINE
It's gonna rain.

James looks up. The entire sky is filled with deep gray clouds. Thunder rolls in the distance.

JAMES
Just great. It was a clear blue day
like, fifteen minutes ago.

James frees her foot.

JAMES
You good?

Caroline nods. The two finish the trek to shore.

ROBBIE(O.S.)
Dad! Dad! Look!

Robbie comes bursting through the treeline. Wrapped in his arms is a HUGE EGG. It is nearly the size of his entire upper body. He struggles to hold it.

JAMES
What the hell?

James looks back up to the cliff ledge where Robbie stood. All that brown, dead brush could almost look like the side of a giant bird's nest.

THUNDER CLAPS. LIGHTING FLASHES. A SCREECH fills the air as rain begins pouring down.

A tremendous Eagle descends from the clouds in the distance. Its wings span a good forty feet. It's feathers are a dull gold, orange and gray color.

The Eagle soars down the riverbed, closing in on the family.

Robbie freezes. Caroline starts for him. James stops her.

JAMES

Go back to the car! I got him!

James takes off towards Robbie. Caroline races back into the water.

The Eagle SCREAMS. THUNDER CRASHES.

LIGHTNING STRIKES the water a few feet away from Caroline. Her body goes rigid as one billion volts of electricity surge through her body.

She goes limp and falls face down in the water.

JAMES

CAROLINE!

The great Eagle lands between James and Robbie. The ground trembles. Robbie drops the egg, which lands unscathed.

The Eagle turns to James and SCREAMS again. Each scream accompanied by a FLASH of lightning and CRASH of thunder.

James stumbles and falls backwards. He tries to scramble away. The Eagle reaches out with its clawed foot and sinks its talons deep into his leg. James cries out in pain.

It yanks him closer. The great bird stares down at him. James looks up...

...into its clouded, cataract filled eyes.

JAMES

Oh my God.

The Eagle buries its huge beak into James' stomach.

Blood flows over his American Eagle T-shirt. He lets out a gurgled scream. The bird lifts its head up.

Pinched in its beak, like a clump of bloody worms, is James' entire intestinal tract. A single strand of intestine still runs to the torso.

The bird pulls on it. James lets out a dying scream.

The intestine TEARS away. The Eagle tilts its head back and lets the inards fall down its gullet.

The Eagle finishes swallowing and looks down at the body.

A twig SNAPS. The bird's head turns on a swivel.

Robbie disappears through the bushes.

The Eagle drifts over to its egg, grasps it gently in its talons, then takes to the sky.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Robbie runs full force through the field. The wind whips the tall grass around him.

The thunder CLAPS and lightning FLASHES are so frequent, they create a strobe effect across the darkened plain.

The Eagle's shadow races along the field towards Robbie. He's going too slow, but he's closing in on the treeline. Just a few more feet to go and--

The Eagle's claw wraps around him. It yanks him off his feet and carries him into the sky.

Robbie cries out as the Eagle disappears above the treeline. The lightning, thunder and screams all dissipate in unison.

EXT. RIVERBED - CONTINUOUS

Caroline lies dead in the water. Her shawl ripples with the current. The rain that falls upon her ceases.

James' dead eyes stare up. His mouth frozen in a scream. Emerging sunlight slides along his body.

The Winnebago sits in the distance. Blue sky peeks out from the clouds above.

EXT. INDIAN CRAFTS STORE - DAY

Kwatoko sits on the porch, feeding his baby eagles. The sun beams down upon him.

A small car pulls up to the store. A YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN exit and walk to the porch.

YOUNG MAN

Hi. You happen to have a restroom I could use?

Kwatoko nods.

KWATOKO

You have to buy something though.

The Young Man goes inside leaving the Young Woman to look over the crafts.

KWATOKO

Where are you two headed?

YOUNG WOMAN

We're headed west. Planning to hit
Goat Mountain by sundown.

KWATOKO

Sounds like a good plan.

Kwatoko turns, grabs a bit of meat and reaches into the cage
with it.

The Young Woman sees the baby eagles and comes over.

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh my! Look how cute they are! How
old are they?

KWATOKO

Pretty young. I find them orphaned
sometimes. I raise them until it's
time for them go out on their own.

YOUNG WOMAN

Aww... Is that one hurt?

The Young Woman points to a single eaglet. It cowers in the
corner away from the other two.

Just above its left eye is a small scar.

KWATOKO

No, that scar is old. He's just
scared. He's not used to this.

Kwatoko leans in with his chunk of rat meat. The eaglet
shies away.

KWATOKO

Come on little one. You have to eat
sometime.

FADE OUT