

ESCAPE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. NURSING HOME - BERT'S ROOM - DAY

BERT, 83, shaky and frail, looks out the window, watches as a van pulls up: COMFORT CARE HOSPICE SERVICES.

A NURSE exits the vehicle.

LATER

The Nurse checks his blood pressure.

NURSE
Looks pretty good today.

BERT
I feel like shit.

NURSE
You know how this goes. Good days
and bad days.

BERT
Until there are no days.

She pats him on the shoulder, gathers her equipment.

NURSE
Has your son come by?

BERT
No. Thank God. Abusive, money-
hungry jerk.

NURSE
People can change, Bert.

BERT
Not many. Not him. Sometimes, best
you can do is get away. Keep 'em at
a distance.

NURSE
I'll be back tomorrow. Hopefully,
you'll be feeling better.

BERT
You didn't ask me about my
grandson.

She chuckles.

NURSE
How's your grandson?

BERT
Number one in his class.

NURSE
So, same as yesterday.

Bert beams as she turns for the door.

BERT
When you gonna bust me outta here?

She laughs.

NURSE
I'll see you tomorrow.

HALLWAY

Bert peeks from his room. Checks that the hallway is clear.

BERT'S ROOM

Bert looks at himself in the mirror. Gathering courage.

He glances back to the door, one last check that he's alone.

Bert reaches up and slides an ATM card from its hiding spot behind the mirror.

He climbs out an open window.

EXT. BANK - ATM - DAY

Bert slides the card into the ATM, squints to read the screen: BALANCE = \$14,350.

He taps the keypad: WITHDRAWAL. 1. 4. 3. 5. 0.

INT. STORE - DAY

A hobby shop. CLERK behind the register.

Bert sets a boxed-up metal detector on the counter.

BERT
Gonna need a shovel, too, I guess.

The Clerk grabs a nearby shovel, holds it up for Bert to see.

BERT
That'll do fine.

CLERK
Carry pouch? Gloves?

Bert waves him off, pays.

CLERK
Never too late to start a new
hobby.

Bert takes the detector and shovel.

BERT
I ain't never been much for
hobbies. Certainly not starting one
now.

He shuffles for the door.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A car pulls away, leaving Bert standing next to a large, open
cardboard box.

Several items peek from the box, including a large, wrapped
present, a gas can, and his shovel.

To no one in particular...

BERT
It's only the diggin' that's left.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Bert slumps, completely spent, at the base of a tree, his
clothes muddy and stained.

He tosses the shovel to the side, pulls the wrapped present
to his lap.

He glances at a card on the present. In shaky handwriting, it
reads: FOR JOSH, ON HIS 18TH BIRTHDAY. DON'T OPEN EARLY!

Bert leans his head back against the tree.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. FARMER'S FIELD - DAY

OVER BLACK - SUPER: 5 YEARS LATER

Slowly, JOSH, 18, blinks awake. He sees: Sky. Clouds. And, right above him, a large tree branch.

BERT (V.O.)
Hit it good. One tree in the whole area and you found it. Knocked you out cold.

Josh feels his head, sits up, looks around. He's on the edge of a dried-up corn field, and he's clearly alone.

He stands, picks up his metal detector and shovel.

Moving away from the tree, he resumes his search along the edge of the field, sweeping the detector from side to side.

BERT (V.O.)
Not even going to say thank you?

Josh stops, looks around again. Mumbles...

JOSH
For what? Being a symptom of a possible concussion?

BERT (O.S.)
For the birthday present.

Josh spins, to see: Bert. Smiling. Proud.

JOSH
Grandpa?

BERT
Surprise.

JOSH
Are you--?

BERT
In your head? Probably. Who's to say? You think when you're dead, you get all the answers. Nope. Five years, I ain't learned nothin' new.

He points to the detector.

BERT
What'dya think? Nice, huh?

JOSH
It's awesome, thank you.

BERT
So, why you out *here*?

JOSH
I don't know. Seemed like a good
place to start.

BERT
So you didn't find it?
(off Josh's look)
Check the batteries.

Josh hesitates.

BERT
Come on. Take a look.

Josh flips the detector over, pops open the battery
compartment.

BERT
Take 'em out.

Josh takes out the batteries, exposing several folded pieces
of paper.

BERT
You didn't read 'em?

He unfolds the papers, laughs.

JOSH
I figured it was warranty
information or something.

BERT
Nope. Hidden treasure.

Josh smiles as he reads, shakes his head...

JOSH
Always hiding things.

Bert heads away from the field. Calls back...

BERT
Come on!

Josh looks at the map, then back up. Bert is gone.

Josh grabs his gear.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Josh skids his bike to a stop.

Detector in hand, he runs to a nearby bench. Checking the map, he begins to count steps heading away from the bench.

JOSH
One. Two. Three.

BERT (V.O.)
Smaller steps.

Josh stops.

BERT (O.S.)
I was 83. Walk like an old man.

Josh glances back, at Bert. He nods, shortens his steps.

JOSH
Four. Five. Six.

LATER

JOSH
One hundred, thirty three.

He stops.

BERT
This looks about right.

Josh sweeps the metal detector around. He gets a hit just a few steps away.

BERT
Jackpot.

LATER

Josh pulls a small box from a freshly dug hole.

Inside, wrapped in plastic: a sweet set of sunglasses.
Expensive.

BERT
I had a pair just like that when I
was in the Navy. The girls loved
'em.
(points to the map)
Let's get a move on. Don't know how
long I'll be around.

Josh flips to the next page, looks around. He sees a children's slide.

They walk toward it.

BERT
Your father still a -- ?

JOSH
-- Son of a bitch? Yes.

BERT
I kind of failed you on that one.

LATER

The detector SQUEALS: a solid hit.

Josh digs.

LATER

He reaches into a rather large hole, pulls out a gas can.

BERT
Turn it over.

Josh does, finds a note on the bottom: FILL THIS UP.

BERT
One more.

LATER

Josh stares at a tree.

BERT
What are you waiting for?

JOSH
This is where they found you.

BERT
It was die here, or the nursing home. I think I made the right choice.

He puts his hand on Josh's shoulder.

BERT
Always control your own destiny, Josh. Okay?

Josh nods.

Bert hugs him.

BERT
Promise me.

JOSH
I got it. Control my destiny.

Bert releases him, then sits at the base of the tree, just as he did five years ago.

BERT
I believe it's twenty steps.
(points)
That way.

JOSH
But--

BERT
--You got this.

Josh starts counting steps.

Stops. Turns back.

Bert is gone.

LATER

Josh sets the detector down, digs.

He quickly finds: A KEYCHAIN. One key. The keychain's tag reads: U-STORE, UNIT 219.

EXT. STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Josh stands, gas can in hand, facing the door of a large storage bay--one in a long line of storage bays.

He throws the door open.

Inside: a dusty, vintage sports car.

INT. STORAGE BAY - SECONDS LATER

Josh peers into the car. On the passenger seat: a set of car keys and a large stack of money.

INT. CAR - MINUTES LATER

Josh slips on the sunglasses. Smiles.

BERT (V.O.)
You got this.

Josh turns the key in the ignition.

The engine roars to life.

FADE OUT.