

FLAMES OF THE CAMPFIRE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A FAMILY SUV cruises down a quiet road. Inside:

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Three YOUNG BOYS (ages 2-6) sleep soundly in the backseat. Up front, tension simmers.

JACK (40s) grips the wheel. His jaw is tight.

EMMA (30s) stares out the window, arms crossed.

They speak in hushed, bitter tones.

JACK

You're the one who sought out the
fucking lawyers.

EMMA

You left me no fucking choice.

JACK

I never wanted a divorce.

EMMA

Yes you did. You just never had the
balls to ask for one.

Jack flinches. Emma's voice cracks.

EMMA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You're never home. Always excuses.
And even when you are, you eat by
yourself. You sit alone and you
always make sure you fall asleep on
the sofa. It's been like this for
almost a year.

JACK

Then what are we even doing?

EMMA

You promised the boys a camping
trip. So you're going to give them
one. And you're going to have a
great time. Because after this...
the kids are staying with me. And
you'll only see them when I feel
like it.

Silence. The car hums on.

EXT. WOODED CAMPSITE - DAY

The boys struggle to pitch a family-sized tent. Jack and Emma sit apart, watching. Despite everything, they smile.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The family lies in sleeping bags. All asleep—except Jack. He watches Emma and the boys.

JACK
(softly)
I can't let this happen.

INT. TENT - MORNING

Emma jolts awake. Jack is slumped upright, groggy.

EMMA
Where the hell are they?

Jack blinks. The boys are gone.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MORNING

Jack and Emma race around, calling out.

EMMA
(furious)
You took them. You hid them because
I'm divorcing you!

JACK
(hurt)
How little you think of me.

INT. VAN - MOVING - MORNING

The three boys are gagged and bound. Other kidnapped children are crammed in. Two UGLY BROTHERS (30s) drive, laughing cruelly.

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

Jack finds clues: tire marks, cigarette butts, beer bottles.

JACK
None of this was here before.

EMMA
We need to find them. Fast.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

A LARGE THUG (20s) urinates into the river. In one hand, a cigarette. In the other, a beer bottle. Jack and Emma confront him.

JACK
You seen any kids around here?

The large thug's face changes. Dropping the cigarette and beer bottle he zips up and turns to run.

Jack crashes his shoulder into him. The large thug turns to face him, grabbing a hold of Jack he starts to strangle him.

Emma leaps into action, pulling on the thug's shirt, ripping it. It's torn in half-his back is covered in terrible looking scars.

Emma stops.

EMMA
Oh God. Your back.

The thug lets go of Jack's neck, Jack drops to his knees coughing.

Emma touches one of the scars.

EMMA (CONT'D)
What the hell happened to you?

The large thug looks at her.

LARGE THUG
They make me drive. If I say no.
They hold me down and whip him.

Emma reaches down to the thug's hand, holding it.

EMMA
(softly)
I just want my babies back.

The thug hesitates.

Her kindness lands.

LARGE THUG
You're kind.

EMMA
Do you know where they are?

The large thug nods.

JACK
So, you're not alone?

The large thug shakes his head.

LARGE THUG
My brothers.

JACK
You're scared of them aren't you?

The large thug nods.

LARGE THUG
I need help. I don't want to do
this no more.

EXT. HIDEOUT - DAY

The large thug leads Jack and Emma to a hidden van. Inside:
their boys. Relief floods their faces.

Suddenly, the TWO BROTHERS return, knives drawn.

LARGE THUG
Go. Now!

He tackles them, buying time. Jack and Emma jump in the van
and speed off.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Jack and Emma reunite with their boys--and the other kidnapped
children. They hold hands, finally united.

EMMA
We won't stop. Not until every one
of these kids is home.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A POLICE CAR pulls up behind the van. Jack and Emma wave it
down, hopeful.

Inside the cruiser: the TWO BROTHERS, dressed as beaten-up cops.

Jack and Emma don't realize who they are...

FADE OUT.

THE END.