

WHITE ICING IN BLACKWATER CREEK

Written by

Anonymous

Based on, Some Truths

TITLE OVER: AFTER THE FIRES, FORT MAC, ALBERTA, 2017

STILL FRAME SHOT OF DEVASTATION FROM WILDFIRES

CUT TO:

FADE IN TELEVISION STATIC:

BIANCA (V.O.)  
Cccchhh! That's my brain now.

CLOSE ON: EJECT VCR TAPE

Slender hands belonging to BIANCA, 16, places the tape next to the memory:

A SCRATCHED PICTURE OF A CABIN IN THE WOODS

Long gold hair sweeps against it brushing it to the floor.

The picture FALLS: SLOW. DOWN... DOWN... LANDING on a PECULIAR ANGLE against a toy STUFFED BEAR.

Her WEEPING commences. The sound of heartache as she reaches to pick it up along with the bear, squeezing it to her chest.

Behind her, she's unaware of her father, a worn looking man of 50 some years. He PEERS through the doorway to witness

His daughter clearly crying-- again. He's upset, unable to do anything about it, with a lack for expressing his feelings, he subdues himself, disappears behind the crack in the door.

MOMENTS LATER:

INT. BIANCA'S HOUSE GARAGE - DAY

Bianca enters the garage where her father, GLEN, sands down a coffee table. Stops. Looks at her. A blonde heartbreaker, heartbroken, tender-serious as she sways from side to side in her sequined shoes.

GLEN  
You used to do that ever since you were a little girl. Sway like that, when you were upset.

BIANCA  
Dad, I want to stay with Uncle Skinny for awhile.

GLEN

It's been two years since the fires. Let it be.

BIANCA

It's not just trying to rebuild our lives here. It's not that. It's something I can't explain, Dad--

GLEN

Uncle Skinny is wild and crazy and--

BIANCA

He's your brother. Why do you have to talk like that?

Glen begins SANDING-- REALLY HARD!

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Dad?

Glen stops. Looks up at her. His eyes soften to pools.

GLEN

Because I don't want to lose you.  
Like I lost your mother.

Bianca runs to her father. Kisses, hugs him.

BIANCA

I love you Dad.

GLEN

You listen to Uncle Skinny now. He knows the woods. He's a smart guy.

Bianca's eyes beam joy through the tears.

GLEN (CONT'D)

Go pack. And take that old tape for Uncle. He'll get a kick out of it.

EXT. TRAPPER'S CABIN, BEAR LAKE B.C. - NIGHTFALL

TIMELAPSE as the sun turns the FOREST SKY to deepening forms of green and blue.

A rustle in the trees reveals a dog emerge from the bush to the right of an OLD OUTHOUSE. TOBY THE DOG, a rottweiler heads to

THE PORCH and lies by the woodpile next to the front door.

ATOP THE WOODPILE lies FLUFFY The CAT, a long haired white cat with golden eyes alight with a glow from the solar lights placed around the porch's parameter.

RAIN begins to BATTER the old tin roof. Toby gets up, whines at the door. A rotund UNCLE SKINNY, 50s, opens from inside.

SKINNY

Come on Toby.

As Skinny hollers the greeting, Fluffy bounces off the woodpile at the heels of Toby as they both enter inside.

INSIDE CABIN:

A LOG thrown into an old black stove. SHUT & CLAMPED!

SKINNY (CONT'D)

Stoke that fire Tommy!

Bianca, still in her sequined shoes watches THE FIRE, crackling through soot smeared glass.

BIANCA

Ah- Uncle Skinny?

Skinny lights a cigarette, didn't hear her, talks to himself as he packs his monster sized duffel.

SKINNY

Got a change of underwear.  
Toothpaste. Courage for the wicked.

He holds up a jug of moonshine. Takes a swig and packs it in his case before noticing Bianca staring at him.

BIANCA

Who's Tommy?

Skinny really sees her now. An Alice in Wonderland.

SKINNY

Bianca... Ugh! Why did your dad  
have to give you that three-sybler.

BIANCA

Syllable--Er.

SKINNY

See what I mean? Everyone wanted to  
call you Alice except your dad.

BIANCA

You can call me Alice.

SKINNY

He'd punch me to kingdom come.

BIANCA

He'll be alright with it. After the fires... He's softer now.

SKINNY

Tough times can change a man.  
Excuse me, or a lady.

He's back to rummaging through:

CLOSE ON: INSIDE BIG DUFFLE Not much to rummage through.  
Skinny shuffles the contents, TOOTHPASTE, UNDERWEAR... THE  
JUG OF MOONSHINE. The huge duffel, mostly empty.

BIANCA

Well...

She begins, then notices a big snacking package next to the  
duffel. SQUIRREL'S FINEST

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Nuts. You forgot the nuts.

SKINNY

Can't be on the trail without  
those. Thanks, Alice!

BIANCA

So... Tommy?

SKINNY

Just something we used to say  
around here. It just stuck. But  
what about you? You sure you're up  
for this?

BIANCA

I want to prove to my Dad that I  
can handle it.

Uncle Skinny takes his duffel, places it by the door.

SKINNY

That's it then!

BIANCA

Uncle Skinny? You think Dad's  
right, maybe? What if the fire goes  
out and I lose power? You said it  
happens. Lots of power outages.

SKINNY

Candles. You could go the route of  
flint and tinder, but candles are a  
good start.

BIANCA

And you'll be back tomorrow night.

SKINNY

With lots of fish and some poetry  
from our nearest neighbor, Stable  
Able. I ever tell you 'bout him?  
Good as gold. Worst hermit I ever  
saw. Beats me by jillions.  
Gotta check on 'im though. He  
expects me. He'll have notched out  
twenty lines in that stick of wood  
by now. Twenty days till company.

INT. STABLE ABLE'S CABIN

A PICTURE OF ABLE, 80s, a soup ladle in hand. A soft solar  
light emits a glow at the small window. Besides that: empty.

BACK AT SKINNY'S PORCH

SKINNY

Just wave farewell, don't say  
goodbye...

He waves at the night. Bianca eyes the abyss. Skinny stuffs  
his duffel in his ATV's wood-box carrier. He climbs aboard.

SKINNY (CONT'D)

Oh! (pointing) I left Fluffy's  
empty can o' cat food. Meant to  
burn it earlier. Brings in the  
bears. Mind throwin' it in the  
fire? Love Fluffy, but Fluffy's  
hooked on the amenities of city  
livin'. Those (points again)

STACK OF UNOPENED CANS OF CAT FOOD on a shelf in a corner.

SKINNY (CONT'D)

-- once they're opened they're like  
a bear magnet. One scent of those  
on the wind and it's Grrrr all over  
the place.

Toby does his dog-talk to Skinny. Skinny pets him.

SKINNY (CONT'D)

I know. You'll keep those bears at bay won't you Toby. But let's not give 'em any extra reason to come.

BIANCA

Can o' cat food. Fire. Got it.

She's about to grab it and

SKINNY

And just about forgot. There's Tommy. Didn't I mention Tommy?

BIANCA

Something about he's stuck.

SKINNY

Yeah. Kinduv. Maybe. He sometimes shows up. You'll know 'im when you meet 'im. Friendlier than all getup. Just don't let him get in one of his moods. He's a sad sort when that happens. Poor Tommy. Stoke it Tommy. Stoke that fire!

Skinny REVS the ATV. There he goes! Off into the night!

The ATV's motor fades to the deep. SILENCE, but now the whining of Toby as he winds this way and that around Bianca's legs, begging for attention.

Bianca pets up Toby.

BIANCA

Yes you're a good boy. A really really good boy.

She grabs the can of cat food. As she does, she doesn't notice the OTHER ONE, an EMPTY CAN 'O CAT FOOD, FALLS AND ROLLS NEXT TO THE WOODPILE. She closes the door on:

THE NIGHT outside, a faint song in the distance

SONG

It could be any night when sorrow creeps, a night we sleep...

WHISTLING. HUMMING.

It's coming from a trail somewhere near the highway:

It's TOMMY, a Native, young looking, but well past middle age wayfarer as he leaves a broken down TRUCK behind.

A FLAT TIRE sinking in the mucky rain drenched dirt. He's wearing a headlight on his head, he's wet but satisfied.

TOMMY

It's a good truck. Good off-roader,  
that's for sure. He'll like it...

Tommy turns to look back at the truck before carrying on

With his song. *It could be any night when sorrow creeps, a night we sleep...* The song fades into the diluvial sky.

INSIDE SKINNY'S CABIN

Except the sound of Bianca tossing the can in the fire and SLAMMING the stove shut in a mimick of Skinny, there's quiet.

She glances around at it all. Old relics from the past.

A stuffed wolverine stares down at her.

An old tin fry pan that someone cared to paint with pretty pink flowers hangs near

A picture of A CABIN IN THE WOODS

BIANCA

A cabin in the woods in a cabin in  
the woods. Fluffy, there's you!

Sure enough, a white cat sits in the window. Looking outside, apparently, at Bianca and its double upon her shoulders.

She pets Fluffy. Sits down on the couch with her.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Wanna watch a video?

Bianca gets up, takes the tape out of her bag. Puts it in Skinny's VCR and pushes play.

BIANCA, 8, on a swing outside the cabin. Behind her, a small campfire burns.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

That's me. Before. Before.

A SCRAPING SOUND outside the door.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Toby. (speaking to the door) You  
gotta stay out and watch for--

She NOTICES TOBY, under the table.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
If you're here, then who's there?

She stops the video. Lifts the front curtain. Looks.

A BLACK BEAR on the porch. Nosing out the can. She swishes the curtain back. Backs away.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
What do I do? What I can't shoot.  
The door's a crappy door!

BIANCA'S HEAVY BREATHING fills the air.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
Fire. Bears hate fire. NO! I HATE  
FIRE! Knife. No. I can't fight a  
bear with a knife. Run. Run where?  
I'm not going anywhere. I'm not  
going out THERE. Phone. Phone Dad.

She eyes the phone. Reaches for it. Puts it back down.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
No. I can't phone Dad. FEED. FEED  
the bear. He'll be happy and leave.

She opens the fridge, HAULS A BIG FISH, to the door she runs.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
Door. I can't open the door.  
Window...

She moves the curtain opens the window and FLINGS the fish.

The BEAR, a happy camper, EATS.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
Good. Good. Happy Bear. Happy Bear.

MINUTES LATER:

The BEAR AMBLES AWAY and walking directly past the bear towards the cabin is Tommy. He enters the porch. KNOCKS.

Bianca backs away again, still in shock.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
What's worse? A stranger or a bear?

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK...

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
 Hah-hah. Don't talk to strangers.  
 That's what they used to say. And  
 now, I need to see someone.

She's compelled. RUSHES TO THE DOOR.

BIANCA (CONT'D)  
 Oh God! I don't know who you are  
 but I'm so happy to see you!

Tommy is barely at the threshold when he's embraced by  
 Bianca, weeping tears of joy.

TOMMY  
 It's me, Tommy. I thought your  
 Uncle Skinny told you about me.

BIANCA  
 Tommy? Yes! I forgot. I was just--  
 oh God come in.

TOMMY  
 Why are you feeding bears?!

BIANCA  
 I wanna make 'em happy?

TOMMY  
 They get habitual don't you know?  
 They keep comin' back.

Bianca nods no, eyes wide.

TOMMY (CONT'D)  
 Here, I brought this for Skinny,  
 since he's not here. You have it.

Tommy holds out a sickly sweet, manufactured and imported  
 from Pine Central City, an icing drenched cinnamon bun  
 wrapped in cellophane with a little best before date sticker.

Bianca takes it. Pulls up a chair for him. Places the bun  
 down next to a withered looking candle.

TOMMY (CONT'D)  
 You too young to drink. Mind if I  
 drink? I know where he keeps it.

BIANCA  
 Oh yeah. Skinny likes his drink.  
 Help your--

But Tommy's ahead of the game, helping himself in the cupboard. Bianca watches as he pours his glass and sits down.

TOMMY

When I first met Skinny I wasn't too sure. White man and all. But we become good friends over the years.

BIANCA

He's told me stories.

TOMMY

Tell you I got him sent to jail?

Deer eyes from Bianca again.

BIANCA

No.

TOMMY

We got into a fight once. My trapline his trapline. Well, he leased the trapline from me, but technically...

BIANCA

Your trapline, but he leased it from you.

TOMMY

Yeah. So we had this fight and around that time my mom was in the hospital. Cancer. I left the Reserve with a stolen vehicle, was gonna take it to Pine Central to get Mom outta there. Not be dying in a White Man's World.

BIANCA

Did you take her back with you?

TOMMY

Never got there in time. Wound up stealing the car, getting Skinny to drive it. I'd had too much to drink and too many thoughts, head spinning. I owed Skinny an apology. I was driving that stolen car without a license and I was drunk ta boot. I pulled into the turnoff, made it here, got Skinny to drive, the rest is history.

BIANCA  
Police pulled you over.

TOMMY  
Cops pulled SKINNY over. Dragged  
right into the mess and landed in  
jail. Thing is, still want to make  
it right. Brought Skinny a good  
truck. An off-roader, but good.

BIANCA  
I didn't see a truck.

TOMMY  
Got a flat on the curve.

A LITTLE LATER ON THE PORCH:

Tommy is surely inebriated.

BIANCA  
Maybe you should eat.

TOMMY  
Nope. Back to the Reserve.

BIANCA  
In the dark? On foot?

TOMMY  
Yep. I'm walking outta here. It's  
an Indian thing.

BIANCA  
OK but you take the cinnamon bun.  
Eat it. It's better than nothing.  
Even if it's a white man's thing.

TOMMY  
Not very good are they. Whadya  
expect. El Coyote's General Store.

BIANCA  
It's food. It's something.

TOMMY  
Sure. But doesn't that make me an  
Indian Giver?

Tommy laughs, kisses Bianca's forehead. She smiles. Tommy  
strolls crookedly into the black.

INT. ABLE'S CABIN

Skinny eats a cold can of beans by himself. Across from him, an empty chair. Must be where Able used to sit.

SKINNY  
 (to the empty chair)  
 Like I promised. Every twenty days.  
 Here Able, I'll notch the stick.

Skinny takes a knife and carves.

SKINNY (CONT'D)  
 What you say? Death is in the air?  
 I feel 'im too. Going...

EXT. NEAR BLACKWATER CREEK - NIGHT TO DAY

The wayfarer continues. His song continues... his FOOTFALLS hollow on the solid ground, his HEADLIGHT strapped upon his forehead, it shines upon the CINNAMON BUN. He unwraps it. Takes a bite.

TOMMY,  
 It could be any night when sorrow  
 creeps, a night we sleep... hmmm...

He sings. Then stumbles. His headlight FLASHES a SWORD of LIGHT into the dark. A brief vision of the wood stairs turned upside down and Tommy, motionless, head down in the creek.  
 WATER SOUNDS LESS OMINOUS

IN THE DAY: THE CINNAMON BUN hugs a rock as water rushes over it and the stones below.

SWEET WHITE ICING washing away in a bubble of current, past the sign that reads: BLACKWATER CREEK

BIANCA (V.O.)  
 Hi, Dad. It's wonderful! Just like  
 in the old days. And I met a friend  
 of Uncle Skinny's, so brave, just  
 like you!

GLEN (V.O.)  
 That's wonderful honey.

FADE TO BLACK.