

WINTER'S BITE

Written by

The Frozen Canadian

FADE IN:

INT. SEDAN - MORNING

The sound of the car motor PUTTERING wakes RONNIE (20's), nerdy, who sits on the passenger side. His head rests on a window that's frosted through. Every exhale is visible in the frigid temperature.

He takes his glasses from his pocket, puts them on and looks to MIKE (20's), athletic, sitting in the driver seat.

RONNIE
What are you doing?

MIKE
It's too cold.

Ronnie looks at the needle -- gas is on empty.

RONNIE
We need it to survive another night.

MIKE
We won't make it to the night.

Ronnie concedes, takes his gloves off and begins to warm his fingers on the vent.

He looks in the back seat to KYLE (20's), still sleeping, and CHRIS (20's), husky -- holding a steel canteen in one hand as the other frantically thumbs a lighter that's almost out of fluid.

RONNIE
You alright?

CHRIS
You know, I don't even like fishing -- let alone ice fishing. I should be at home.

MIKE
I'm sorry.

Chris finally gets a spark and holds it under the canteen.

CHRIS
I was trying for weeks to think of an excuse. Wife made me come. "It's not everyday your friend gets married" -- that's what she said.

MIKE

I -- I didn't know.

CHRIS

Don't even have snow tires --

RONNIE

Chris, stop it. It wouldn't matter either way -- you know that. You'd need a plow to get through this.

Chris shakes the canteen and takes a swig. He passes it forward.

CHRIS

I don't think I can get another spark. This is the last.

Ronnie takes a mouth full and hands it to Mike.

MIKE

We'll just drink it cold.

RONNIE

You can't drink snow water.

MIKE

You can if you have to.

CHRIS

Nobody in this car is going to die of thirst you idiot. We're gonna freeze to death.

RONNIE

(to Chris)

Would you stop? You're not helping.

Chris looks to Kyle. There's frost on his eyebrows.

CHRIS

Kyle doesn't look so good.

RONNIE

You need to wake him. His core temperature has dropped.

Chris shakes Kyle.

CHRIS

Come on Buddy -- wake up you shit.

Kyle opens his eyes. He's shivering. His head remains turtled into his coat.

Mike reaches back and hands Kyle the canteen.

MIKE

Here.

He brings it to his mouth with shaky hands -- the canteen RATTLES on his teeth.

After a few sips, he hands the canteen back to Chris.

KYLE

I c-can't feel my f-feet.

Ronnie has four cellphones on the dashboard in front of him. He presses buttons -- they're all out of batteries except for --

RONNIE

Chris' phone is the only one with juice.

Down to one bar, to be exact.

KYLE

Mike!?

MIKE

Yeah, I'm here.

KYLE

Jesus, M-Mike. I c-cant f-feel --

MIKE

Ronnie's gonna try the phones again, Kyle. It's gonna work this time.

Kyle, with what little strength is left, pulls his shoe to the knee and begins clawing at the laces.

He pulls off the shoe and sock to reveal a foot with blackened toes -- black as coal.

He SCREAMS.

KYLE

My f-foot. I'm g-gonna die.

Chris see's the bare foot -- scrambles to pick up Kyle's sock.

CHRIS

(to Kyle)

Are you nuts!?

Chris blows hot air into the sock and slips it back on. Then, after securing the shoe, he ties Kyle's laces as tight as he can.

KYLE

Th-they're gonna c-cut them off
aren't they?

MIKE

You're gonna be fine. It's gonna
work this time.

Ronnie dials the number and holds the phone to his ear. The car goes silent -- so silent that the other three can hear the ring-tone as clear as Ronnie.

They wait in anticipation until --

PHONE

We are unable to connect your call.
Please try --

Ronnie ends the call quickly to conserve every pixel of battery life.

RONNIE

It's okay -- I'll try again in 20
minutes.

KYLE

I d-don't want to d-die, Mike!

Mike gives a concerned look to Ronnie.

RONNIE

Chris, give me the canteen.

Chris hands him the canteen. Ronnie pours what's left into an empty fast-food cup -- unzips his fly.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

(to Mike)

Look away. I can't do it if you're
looking.

A beat.

What starts as a trickle, turns to a steady stream as the urine fills the canteen.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

(Looking at Mike and
Chris)

Anyone else?

MIKE

I can't.

CHRIS

Nothing.

Ronnie hands the canteen to Chris.

RONNIE

Put it under his coat.

Chris fights Kyle's arms away from his core, unzips the jacket and puts the warm canteen against his chest -- zips him back up.

CHRIS

Hold it tight, okay? You're not gonna die okay?

Kyle shakes his head -- "understood."

The PURR of the engine turns into a WHEEZE before dying completely.

MIKE

Shit.

Mike cranks the key but it's no use.

KYLE

G-gonna d-d-die --

CHRIS

Shut up! Shut up!

RONNIE

Okay, think -- think. Mike's phone had the best reception, right?

MIKE

Batteries dead two days ago, Ron.

Ronnie takes Mike's phone and begins to SLAM it against the dash.

RONNIE

I have an idea.

FADE TO:

INT. SEDAN - EVENING

Ronnie's shaking hands finish tethering a mess of wires from Mike's phone to the battery salvaged from Chris'. His eyebrows are beginning to frost -- his breath cutting the air more than before.

In the back, Chris spins the lighter, holding it to a used tissue. Nothing. Not a spark.

He looks to Kyle, face pale blue, not a breath visible from his mouth or nose.

Chris doesn't even flinch at the sight -- continues to work the lighter.

RONNIE

There.

Ronnie begins to dial, holds the phone to his ear. Chris puts the lighter down for now. The car goes silent.

PHONE

We are unable to connect your call.
Please try again later or --

Mike looks down, his spirit shattered.

MIKE

I'm s-s-s-sorry...

Ronnie dials the phone again.

It rings and rings until --

PHONE

Skshh -- county Sheriff's office.
What's your skshhh -- gency?

The three of them perk up. They would have left their seats if they weren't frozen stiff.

RONNIE

Me and my friends are stuck on the road up to Cedar Lake Lodge -- we've been here for days -- there was an avalanche or something --

PHONE

Skshh -- hello? This is sshhh -- office -- skshh --hello?

RONNIE

Can you hear me!? We're freezing to death!

The phone goes dead. Ronnie mashes the buttons but the batteries are spent.

CHRIS

God -- no.

FADE TO:

INT. SEDAN (FRONT SEAT) - NIGHT

Mike and Ronnie sit in darkness. Only the light of the moon creeps through the frosted windows. Ice forms on every strand of hair on their heads.

RONNIE

C-C-Chris?

There's no answer.

MIKE

Sh-sh-she's p-pregnant, Ron.

(Beat)

Th-that's why I couldn't wait. I'm s-s-s --

RONNIE

N-not your f-f-fault.

MIKE

Sh-shoulda' skipped the t-t-trip, Ron.

RONNIE

N-n-no --

The faintest smile develops on Mike's numb lips.

MIKE

Sh-she's g-gonna have a boy.

Ronnie looks to Mike, tries his best to smile.

RONNIE

W-w-wish I h-had a cigar.

Mike's body fights to laugh -- manages a small CHUCKLE.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

H-h-hear that?

There's a rhythmic CHOPPING in the distance.

MIKE

Th-th-think so.

The sound of helicopter blades WHIRLING gets closer.

A spotlight strafes the car.

Mike looks to Ronnie. Some how and some way, even with the dehydration, a tear forms and runs down his cheek.

FADE OUT.

THE END