FADE AWAY

By Daniel Viau

(C) Copyright 2013
July 12, 2013
FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT


The night sky illuminates the forest. The bright stars twinkle overhead.

EXT. FOREST FIELD - DAY

The tall trees form a ring around a meadow of tall grass and short shrubs. A rabbit nibbles on foliage. It lifts its head, sniffing. Examining the air.


A disturbance from the nearby trees. It's a small boy, 12 or so. Skinny. He comes running to the trap. The rabbit struggles. Kicking.

The small boy lowers down to the rabbit. He swiftly pulls out a hunting knife from its sheath. And plunges it into the rabbit's throat. Vibrant crimson. Blood spurts onto the small features of his face. Red specks matching his freckles. Unflinching.

BOY

Sorry, rabbit... And thank you.

The boy looks up, to the sky. A silent prayer.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The boy walks through the trees, stepping over fresh fall. He holds the rabbit strapped to a stick over his shoulder. He walks and sings as goes.

BOY (singing)

"Heh, man, take a look at my life... I'm a lot like yooooou..."
EXT. FOREST CAMP SITE - DAY

The boy's camp has a small pup tent arranged loosely over a branch. A small fire ready to go. Bundles of timber already prepared. A log bench rests near the firepit.

The boy sets his rabbit-stick down at the bench. He removes his gear: a saddlebag with a dangling rabbit foot charm, and his sheathed knife. He pulls out a bottle of water and drinks.

A curious chipmunk prances over. Boy notices.

BOY
Heh, Flashy... Don't worry. I brought you food too.

Boy reaches into his bag and pulls out some sesame seeds. He gives some to the chipmunk, placing a small pyramid of seeds on the log bench.


BOY
There ya go, buddy.

Boy watches the chipmunk eat. Nibbling. Rotating the shell and cracking it open.

BOY
That's it... It's worth work... Like my dad used to say...

Boy walks to his tent. He grabs a large pawn leaf, previously set aside. He places the leaf out by the bench and firepit. Boy grabs the rabbit-stick. Knife. And places the rabbit carcass on top of the resting leaf.

BOY
Now how should I... Let's see... (looks to sky, thinking)
Thank you, rabbit. Thank you for providing... Bless your spirit for the next world. May you return again and be blessed...
BOY (cont’d)
I do this not just for... myself...
I do it for memory... I hope I
honour you.

Boy opens his eyes. He slips the knife into the rabbit. Bloody. He calmly prepares the rabbit.

The chipmunk remains. Eating.

EXT. FOREST STREAM - DAY


The boy is at a stream. He's bent down, washing his hands in the stream. He pauses, looking at his reflection on the rippling surface. Shimmering face.

    BOY
    I miss you dad. Sometimes
    I think I see you still... in my
    face... I miss you.


EXT. FOREST CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

Flint struck. Sparks. Timber lit. Ignition.

The boy starts his fire. It comes to life with a few soft, long blows of air. Breath causing life. The boy grabs his prepared rabbit. Skinned. Bare muscles showing. Shining. There's a stick through the torso. Legs bound.

    BOY
    Thank you, rabbit.

The boy places the rabbit on the spit, prepared at the firepit. He sits at the bench. Watching. After a moment, the chipmunk returns.
BOY
Flashy... Hungry again? Lil bugger.

Boy smiles. Chipmunk looks. Tilts its head. Examining. Boy fishes some seeds from his pocket. He gives some to the chipmunk. It eats them, right away.

BOY
Me and you, buddy. We're all alone... Together...
(poking fire with a stick)
My mom is gonna be mad... I hope she doesn't call the cops to find me er sumthin... I left her that note. But... This is important. To me.

The boy watches the flames lick the cooking rabbit. Roasting the meat. Crackling. The boy stares at the flames. Wondering. Imagining. The flames stare back.

The boy sees images in the flames. Misshapen. Hallucinatory.

The flames flicker, showing his father. His bearded face. His crooked smile.

Boy looks at Father.

BOY
One year ago. Today... July 1st...
Canada Day...

The flames show his father breaking down a house door with a hard kick.

Three children cower in a corner.

A woman, their mother, screams, crying out. She is held tightly by a masked man. Balaclava. He is tall and thin. He has a long sharp knife to her throat. The woman's clothes are ripped from an earlier struggle. One of her breasts exposed. A savage moment.
BOY
That blaze... they woulda died.
All of em...

The fire remembers. It reflects in the flames. The flickering images of his father pleading with the thin man. Hands out, pleasing with the air.

Father says something to the cowering children. Muffled voices, hollow, indistinguishable. They hold each other tight. Father looks to woman at knife point. He grits his teeth.

FATHER
(hollow, otherworldly)
Take me instead. Let them go.

The thin man does nothing. Says nothing. Father reaches out to the woman.

The woman eyes the thin man, above and behind her. Nothing.

Father holds his open hand out. Reaching. The thin man doesn't react.

The children cry, audible. Hopeless.

The woman looks to Father. He nods. Assuring. The woman reaches her hand out. Slowly. The thin man does nothing. Father takes the woman's hand.

BOY
Sometimes... I wish they did.

Chipmunk squeaks at the boy.

BOY
Not like that, Flashy... My dad saved em, I mean... A hero...

The flames reveal the truth. Father holds the woman for a brief second. Embers float by. The house burning around them.

The woman runs to her children in the corner. Father
watches them. They hug. Consoling.

Father looks to thin man. Hands out, apprehensive. The thin man bolts his hand out and pulls Father in. He holds Father, blade to throat.

**THIN MAN**

Shhh... Nothing...

(harsh whisper)

Fucking nothing...

Father watches the mother and kids. Together. The walls of their room start to burn. The fire spreading to them. Closer and closer.

Police sirens. Firetrucks.

**THIN MAN**

Nothing. We all die here. The fire. It fuckin ends... That's how it happened before...

Say nothing or I'll put this blade through you.

Father looks out from the thin man's grasp. He doesn't struggle.

**COP (O.S.)**

Fitzroy. We know you're in there. This is the police!...

FITZROY!

**THIN MAN**

Nothing. Fuck! Say nothing.

He's lying. He doesn't know...

3 houses. On fire. This street. Lies. Lies... Now stay hushed.

Stay alive.

Father grinds his teeth. Tight. He sees the woman and children. He has to.

**FATHER**

In here! HELP! IN HERE!

HEEEELLLLLL---
Father is interrupted by the blade. Silence over blood. Gushing. With the final heart beats. Arterial spray. Arcing out.

Father sees 2 cops enter the broken doorframe. Eyes close. Father's face.

BOY
But a dead one... Why?
(staring into flames)
He always said to me: "Bad things happen when good people do nothing"... But, it doesn't make sense...

The fire flickers one last image. The woman and children quickly ushered outside by a policeman.

Boy pokes the fire, encouraging the flames to grow.

BOY
He died... I mean, that's a "bad thing" that happened.

The chipmunk looks up at the boy. Examining.

BOY
I miss him.

EXT. FOREST CAMP – NIGHT

Dark now. The boy sits at the fire in his camp. He's eating some rabbit.

BOY
Not as good as dad's, but I still got time.

Boy looks to night sky. Starry night.

Chipmunk returns again.

BOY
Heh, Flashy. Come on over.
Fireworks. This is the best
8.

BOY (cont’d)

spot for em. We’ll watch em
together... like me and dad...

They look to the sky. And wait. The stars reflect in the little boy’s eyes. They reflect wonder.

BOY

Mom doesn't get it... but the night looks way better out here. Where you can still SEE the stars... Sooooo many...


BOY

She's prolly watchin the fireworks with Evey right now... her first Canada Day..

The fireworks take a few seconds between each new colourful burst. Moments in between.

BOY

I wish she coulda met dad. She'll never know what---

He stops. Mid-sentence. The boy looks at the sky. Amazed by something.

Chipmunk looks up. Chirps. Runs away.

The little boy at his little fire, looking up and watching the big big sky.

His jaw drops.

The boy sees the stars. Fading. One by one. Left sky. Right sky. Right above. The stars fade away.

Fireworks again. The finale. Beauty juxtaposed against fear. The stars continue to fade one by one behind the dazzle of the celebration.
Dumbfounded. Awestruck. The boy watches the sky grow dark. Like fireworks in reverse. Each second, another star fades. Disappears. The fireworks are finished, as the sky gets darker.

Finally, the small camp site is all that lights the forest. Small. Insignificant. A speck.

The boy looks up. Watching in silence. Frozen. Fear. Curiosity. And then back to amazement.

A brilliant light streaks across the black sky. Closer. Faster. It's some sort of ship. Alien. It's shaped like a corkscrew football. It shimmers, but is otherwise near invisible against the blackness.

It approaches, burning treetops in its wake. Intense heat from the ship's body does the damage, not a jet engine. The ship slows. Hovering over the mountain edge, across from the camp site.


A humanoid shape appears before the child. A spacesuit. It reaches out with a long thin arm.

ALIEN
Child... Do not fear.

The boy holds his head in his hands.

BOY
It sounds like... inside my head... What---

ALIEN (interrupts)
Child... Do not fear... Years ago, you decided on my appearance... So as not to frighten you.

BOY (tilts head)
Yeah... you are like I would expect... hmm...
ALIEN
As are you... I am not here but there.
(points to ship, then to self)
This is a mental representation.

BOY
What do you want?

ALIEN
Your stars have faded... Long ago. Ages. Unknown to you... Yet, now... you know... You see.

BOY
What does---

ALIEN
Come with me... We know your lineage. You have come from sacrifice... An unknown quality to us... Your new home awaits... It will take decades to get there... But your children will live...

BOY
But my mom... my sister?

ALIEN
Only you... Come.

Alien extends his hand, awaiting acceptance. The boy thinks. Looks to the sky. Back to the fire. His memories. The chipmunk watches too. No longer alone, but with its family, 3 others.

The boy looks to the black sky. No stars. Eerie. He steps forward.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The ship whizzes back to space. Blinking out of vision.
Leaving the night sky truly black... for a long peaceful moment. Only the moon.

And then...

A dozen or so other ships enter the atmosphere. Diverging into different directions. Looking for their own select passengers.

FADE OUT: