RIPPLES

By Alan Richardson

BLUE SCREEN-

GIRL V/O (whisper)

You can drown in a teaspoon of water.

FADE IN:

INT. FARMHOUSE-CANDLE LIT KITCHEN-NIGHT.

The rhythmic sound of droplets, almost like a heartbeat, of water striking water.

As a droplet hits, RIPPLES form on the surface of a nearly overflowing RUSTIC PORCELAIN SINK; through the distorted water a juicy freshly caught TROUT can be seen.

Another bead of water hits; another ripple forms...closer on the ripple as it spreads...then, trapped in the water, the smoky refection of a woman’s face, but more ethereal... a reflection of a ghost?

The illusion is broken as a slender hand tightens the dripping tap.

AT THE SINK- KORAL SUMMERFIELD (19) releases the tap...then brushes strands of tangled wet black hair from her face.

HAUNTED eyes, they seem captivated by the fish- no, no not the fish- the water.

ON THE TAP- a rebellious last drop squeezes out, hits the water- but no ripple forms; as if there was no impact.

Koral tentatively touches the water, just tap water, nothing to be afraid of- but she is.

Hand raised, she scrutinizes her glistening fingers... then, using her thumb and index finger, presses them together and rotates the digits.

KORAL (a murmur to herself)

How did I get out?

Scoured skin etched with deep worry creases, GODFREY (50) watches her from the doorway; he’s clutching a towel and holding a candle in his powerful hands.

With her finger motion and dazed stare- Koral looks deranged, but Godfrey seems unruffled, anaesthetised to her suffering.

He enters.

Now in the flicking candle light we get brief glimpses of fishing paraphernalia: rods regimentally stacked, a glass case of razor sharp hooks hiding in psychedelic flies, trophies, then the ferocious face of an embalmed pike- BESTED but still defiant.

KORAL (distressed)

How did I get out!

The pike’s cold stare follows Godfrey as he passes it and offers the towel to Koral; she persists with her finger motion.

GODFREY

Dry yourself, lass.

He drops the towel into her hand.

KORAL

I remember being in the water… sinking -

screaming…

GODFREY

It’ll come back to you, give it time.

(beat)

Now dry yourself, no point

stayin wet...less thee a fish.

Koral’s mechanically dries her hair.

KORAL (cont’d)

The water was rushing in my mouth, I couldn’t

breathe… then…then waking up outside your door.

(beat)

The police-

GODFREY

No help be comin till we get the power back.

KORAL

But I need them, my friends…

can’t you help me find them?

Godfrey looks out the window- a darken land, dense forest- ISOLATION.

KORAL

Can you?

GODFREY

If there lost, there lost.

Koral heads towards the backdoor, Godfrey blocks her way.

GODFREY

You’re wet and cold, dawn will soon be here.

Your friends… I’m sure they are safe and sound.

(beat)

We’ll find them; I’m certain… do you remember how

you got in the lake?

KORAL

I’m not sure. I’m not sure about-

INT. CAMPER VAN – FLASHBACK- NIGHT.

PIGGSEY(19) stares with astonishment at something outside our vision; he mouths a warning.

END OF FLASHBACK.

BACK IN THE FARMHOUSE-

KORAL (cont’d)

An accident- I think we were in an accident.

The towel slips to the floor as Koral again begins to rotate her thumb and finger.

Godfrey pats an oak chair.

GODFREY

Tis more comfortable than it looks.

Koral shuffles over and crumples into the chair. Godfrey heats water in ancient iron kettle, grabs a couple of battered cups from next to a cracked sugar bowl with the words “sweet tooth” on it.

GODFREY

So lass, you’ve been in an accident?

KORAL

I think so... I’m pretty sure. It was just after -

GODFREY

Sugar?

KORAL

One, no two please… It just after Piggsey-

GODFREY

Piggsey?

KORAL (with real sorrow)

My friend MARK… Piggsey his nickname.

Piggsey was-sorry, Mark was telling us a story- a ghost story…

we were arguing- then I think… we hit something…

Godfrey fishes a quart bottle of whisky out of his jacket pocket and pours a little too much into his tea mug; Koral watches him.

GODFREY

My farther swore by it, lived to hundred.

Whatya say to a drop?

The bottle hovers over Koral’s cup.

KORAL

Thank you, but no- I don’t drink.

Godfrey gives his own mug another helping.

GODFREY

Your loss.

(beat)

You remember the story? Piggsey’s ghost story.

KORAL

Vaguely, it was a creepy tale about the lake.

GODFREY

The lake.

(beat)

So you remember the tale.

Koral looks distressed-

KORAL

Yes… the rest is still muddy.

GODFREY

Well we got a few hours to whittle away, so

tell it.

KORAL

I don’t want to- I don’t want hear it again.

GODFREY

You want to know how you got out the lake?

KORAL

Yes.

GODFREY

Then tell the story.

(beat)

Telling could lead you to remembering more.

Koral composes herself.

KORAL

The lake-

GODFREY

The chairs comfy, but I bet you’re a beggar for a sofa.

Koral and Godfrey exit the kitchen.

ON THE TAP- It begins to drip again, and as a droplet forms a ripple-

KORAL O/S

The lake slept…

EXT-THE LAKE (IN THE WOODS) -PIGGSEY’S TALE-NIGHT.

THE LAKE: surrounded and protected by an ancient- MENACING-forest.

PIGGSEY V/O

And dreamed.

Fluttering patterns swirl, tickle the lake’s surface as it sinks deeper...deeper... into unconscious…

As the lakes dreams descend into nightmares, a tormented- VIOLENT- wave suddenly tears its surface, and from its subterranean depths a fragment of its nightmare is spewed-

Ripples form as a RED BALLON breaks through... drifts- then hides itself in the shadowy embrace of the night.

THE LAKE: ushers oily ripples back to sleep...back to oblivion.

INT-TEENAGERS LOVERS’ TENT-PIGGSEY’S TALE- NIGHT.

A smoke ring dissipates. The glow of a cigarette illuminates BILLY’S mischievous face.

Billy, definitely a ROCKER, blows a “loving” smoke ring at STACY; she buries her head deep into a JAMES DEAN illustrated pillow and yanks the sleeping bag up to her chin.

STACY (irate, half asleep)

Jesus, Billy.

With the hand which holds the cigarette, Billy roughly cups one of Stacy’s tits; she rolls over onto her front trying to guard them.

STACY (muffled)

Cut it Billy.

Billy slides his hand into the sleeping bag searching for a juicier target.

STACY (pissed off)

I told you to cut it- I’m not a piece

of meat you know!

Our boy Billy not much of a talker, he just grins then blows another smoke ring at Stacy.

EXT- TEENAGERS LOVERS’ TENT-PIGGSEY’S TALE- LATER.

An American confederacy flag hangs limply from a tree.

Mickey is gazing at star filled sky as he relieves himself.

HIS EYES: strange...lost- MYSTIFIED; something, outside our point of view, grips their attention. Like a claw clamping, emotions: awe, joy and EUPHORIA are squeezed out of them, and then a pleading-

MICKEY

Let it be me.

PIGGSEY V/O

The lake knows his heart, his desires…

ON BILLY’S FACE-

FEAR invades his eyes; we tumble into his black iris- sinking, plummeting and see-swollen like a football, Billy’s head floating in the lake.

MICKEY (panic-stricken)

No. NO.

PIGGSEY V/O(cont’d)

- His FEARS.

A faint breeze carries its teasing whisper: dare

you to close your eyes Mickey, just a little

blink… it be gone- PROMISE.

Mickey mumbles prays as he closes his eyes.

A star filled sky.

A “beautiful” RED BALLON hovers a foot above Mickey’s head- waiting for his prays to end, his eyes to open- WAITING.

Mickey opens his eyes.

INT-TEENAGERS LOVERS’ TENT-PIGGSEY’S TALE- NIGHT.

Stacy is having a nightmare, and as we creep closer to her contorting body we get subliminal highlights of it:

Mickey, grinning like a loon, is holding a red balloon.

Multi-coloured balloons billow in a tent.

Mickey and Stacy, grinning like loons, are each holding a buddle of balloons.

We’re close enough now to kisses her full lips... when soft as a breeze-

BILLY O/S

Sta...cee Sta...cee wakey whaky babes-

It’s prezzie time.

Stacy wakes; the nightmare still clinging, eyes adjusting to the murky tent, she notices the door flap is open.

STACY

Billy that you?

THE RED BALLOON floats in.

Even in the gloom, we feel it movement is wrong… too weighty- BLOATED; it SQUEAKS as it squirms across the tent’s surfaces leaving a red spewed smear.

A foot away from Stacy’s head the balloon stops.

…Silence…

Then, an incessant buzzing noise, like child’s rattle, emanates from it.

Eyes locked on the balloon, Stacy grasps the flashlight; aims its blade of light- SCREAMS, then SCREAMS again.

ON THE BALLOON- Bound like a prime cut of beef– Mickey’s head; under his new red skin gorged meat flies crawl.

His eyes- STOLEN, but from his blood coated mouth comes a terrifying moan.

EXT- CREEPY FOREST- PIGGSEY’S TALE- NIGHT.

From the sheltered crevice of the trees, we savour Stacy’s frantic flight. Her scream has now ripened into an annoying siren; gleefully, we wait for it to be silenced.

Through the shrubbery a camp fire is blazing- hope for Stacy?

She sees it, needs it comforting glow- its promises of protection.

She doesn’t see the danger – THE TRAP, as she smashes through the brushes and plunges ten feet into the lake.

IN THE LAKE- Stacy panics; her arms flay casting out RIPPLES.

RIPPLES... nimbly they tiptoe over the surface; they grow in strength- IN PURPOSE.

We travel with the ripples and see a bewildering sight: floating on the lake, a black tent with scores of coloured balloons tied to it and next to it a roaring log fire.

A venomous HISS greets the RIPPLES as they brush past the fire and break against the tent...knocking- waking up-

SABINE’S DEMON- dredged from hell’s sewers-; its hunger filled SCREECH rips across the lake.

Find’s Stacy doing a pathetic doggie paddle as she struggles for the shore.

She turns. Sees the floating tent; watches as the door flap is wrenched open; freezes as the demon’s thrashing torpedo head emerges. Its barbed tongue quivers as it tastes the air-TASTES Stacy, then it takes to the water eating up the distance to her.

Poor Stacy, paralysed, seemingly contented to be meat for the beast- finds strength.

STACY

Help me Jesus- please.

She renews her pitiful stroke- the banks only a few feet away; a tree branch is in her reaching distance. She wastes a foolish glance over shoulder; the lake is silent, the tent and fire are gone.

As Stacy watches, the tip of a vast MONOLITH rises out the water-

STACY

Dreaming, I must be dreaming?

She touches the water…

STACY

Wake up Stacy.

She sinks her arm into it...SCREAMS as she is yanked under.

GO TO A BLUE SCREEN.

INT. CAMPER VAN- OCCUPANTS LATE TEENS-DIRT TRACK- NIGHT.

Lost in thought, sucking on a childhood comfort blanket (calls it her “muffy”) Koral uses her spare hand to thumb through a photo album.

ON THE PHOTOS- windswept landscapes, an exquisite vibrant butterfly caught in a spider’s web.

She flicks the leaf over to reveal a page full of polaroids: mainly of children playing at an orphanage.

Koral gently touches a photo of herself, as a GIRL, sucking on her “muffy” … happy times, memories incarcerated in timeless vinyl.

PIGGSEY O/S

And it’s said: you fling a stone in the

lake at midnight and you’ll see

her soul trapped in the ripples.

LEXY O/S

Horseshit!

Sprawled on the back seats, wallowing in sea of empty beer cans, crisps packets and junk food, PIGGESY feigns an offended frown.

PIGGESY (to Lexy)

Horseshit- my love- I hope you say that

when the beast is feasting on your sexy… JUICY bod.

LEXY, a mean centre creature wrapped up in a sexy chocolate veneer, flicks her half smoked cigarette out the window, and then inspects her hands-

Beautiful painted butterflies flutter on her flawless fingernails.

LEXY (to Piggsey)

Rather the beast than you- baby balls.

Alarmed by the story, BECKY’S mouth races as she chomps on bubble gum; slowly, she blows a half decent bubble.

As Becky leans over the back of her seat, we see old self- inflicted cuts on her wrist.

The chewing gum bubble expands close to Lexy’s hair.

LEXY (to Becky)

Urr. If that sticky shit gets on my- can’t you keep it in your gob?

The offending bubble pops; Lexy jerks her head away and, as if it has been contaminated, furiously rubs her hair.

LEXY (to Becky)

Dumb shit!

Becky peels the gum of her face and plonks it back into her mouth.

BECKY (to Lexy)

Sorry.

Koral glances up and tosses Lexy a “come on behave, it's only Becky” look.

KORAL (to Lexy)

Lex, it’s a bit of gum.

LEXY (to koral)

She’s not a baby! She don’t need mum-

still chewing on your rag I see.

Lexy gives Koral a superior smirk as she turns away.

THROUGH THE VAN’S WINDOW – in a dense forest, a fleeting glimpse of - too quick to be sure, but it could have been a girl.

On LEXY as she opens her packet of cigs, sees it empty. She glances at her seating companion: RYAN, and digs him in his ribs.

LEXY (to Ryan)

I’m out hon.

She pokes him harder; Ryan takes his earplugs out.

LEXY (to Ryan)

Fags?

BECKY (to Piggsey)

- Is the DEMON still there?

… I mean I’m not skinny dipping, I ani’t going in the water,

you know, If it’s still there- is it?

Piggsey gives her a solemn nod.

BECKY

You sure? How do you know?

PIGGSEY

Because it’s still hungry. Hungry for you.

BECKY

Shat!

Becky slumps back into her seat and glumly attacks her gum.

KORAL (to Becky)

It’s just a daft tale Becks, there’s no

water demons-

anyway the campsites

nowhere near the lake.

BECKY (to Koral)

But there’s the Loch Ness monster-

that’s true...so they could be a, a... a demon.

Shat- there’s a demon in the lake.

PIGGSEY (to Becky)

It feasts at night. Tonight!

Piggesy tilts his head back and vacuums the last crumbs out of a crisp packet, then lecherously licks the insides as he stares at Lexy-

PIGGSEY

You can’t beat a good feasts- a finger

lickin spread.

LEXY (to Piggsey)

Pig.

PIGGSEY (to Lexy)

Never said I wasn’t.

Lexy strokes Ryan’s bleached blond hair- plays him; he gives Piggsey a dirty look.

Piggsey answers with a mocking “I’m not scared “grin.

LEXY (to Ryan)

He needs to respect me.

RYAN (to Piggsey)

You hear that? Respect her.

Piggsey grunts.

THROUGH THE VAN’S WINDOW- Koral sees the girl, still in the woods, but closer to the dirt track; Koral cranes her neck round, but the girl has disappeared.

She turns back to her photo album and takes one of the polaroid out of its plastic covering.

KORAL (to Becky as she shows her the picture)

You remember this?

Koral is about to give her the photo (It’s a group photo of them all when they were in the children’s home) when Becky springs up and leans over her seat.

BECKY (to Piggsey)

Does it come out the lake? The demon?

PIGGSEY

Sure does. Probably come looking for you my love.

Becky is spellbound; she stares at Piggsey- not knowing what to say; she blows a massive bubble.

LEXY (to Becky)

I warned you dipshit.

Lexy shoves Becky’s head away; the bubble pops and sticky gum glues itself to her painted nails.

LEXY (as she looks at her nails)

Dirty- fucking-

Trying to avoid Lexy’s fury, Becky scrambles back into her seat; in the process she knocks the photo out of Koral’s hand and it flutters to the floor.

BECKY (to Koral and Lexy)

Sorry, sorry.

LEXY (to Becky)

Sorry never enough- dipshit. Do

know- do you dipshit- how much these cost me?

She holds up her gum tainted fingernails.

BECKY

Sorry, I didn’t mean- I can fix them.

LEXY

You think I want your grubby hands on me?

Well do you, dipshit?

KORAL

Don’t call her that.

As Lexy looks at Becky’s ruined, grubby finger nails; her face screws up-

LEXY (shakes her head)

Why the FUCK did I agree to waste

a weekend with you fucked up losers?

RYAN (to Lexy thinking she doesn’t mean him as well)

Same, man I could be-

LEXY

All of you!

(beat)

. You need it simplifying?

Lexy snatches the photo off the floor and greedily rips it into two, then four, then eight pieces.

KORAL (to Lexy)

You selfish cow!

LEXY

Clear enough? Need more? Well?

(beat)

*- fuck face*book. Fuck- LAUGHS- childhood friends.

Fuck All Saints children’s home. Fuck reunions. Fuck camping.

Fuck…

PIGGSEY

Piggsey. You forgot me- don’t I need

a good fuckin?

Lexy lets the ripped pieces flutter to the floor.

LEXY (to Piggsey)

With a baseball bat.

ON THE DIRT TRACK-

A FALLOW DEER struts out of the forest onto the track. Majestic, it shows no fear as van races towards it. At the edge of the woods, a fleeting image of the girl; she’s smiling.

PIGGSEY (alarmed)

Deer!

The van driver: CARL’S eyes narrow behind his national health glasses.

CARL (to the deer)

Let’s bake…

He could easy avoid, slam on his breaks- but he doesn’t. The collision is- BRUTAL.

Out of control, the van careers into a ditch.

ON THE DIRT TRACK- MINUTES LATER:

Through gaps in the forest, fringes of the lake gleam.

Carl kicks the punctured tyre- they aren’t going anywhere in a hurry.

The rest of the group are gathered around the inert deer.

Becky is kneeling, stroking its fur.

BECKY (to deer)

There, there, there.

RYAN (to Carl)

Shit you killed BAMBI.

CARL (to Ryan)

Gave me noooo chance.

RYAN (gives Carl a sly look)

You could have dodged it- DUMB SHIT.

CARL (to Ryan)

No way hosay- I think like Bambi wanted to die,

like suicide.

BECKY

Poor thing.

LEXY

Fuck the dead meat, get me a taxi.

Koral kneels down and puts her arm round Becky.

CARL

I say we bake it, you know waste not-

RYAN (to Carl)

Want not- I haven’t heard that saying in years. You

remember that fat bitches other saying?

RYAN AND CARL (in a mocking way)

There are people starving in Africa.

BECKY (to Koral)

Don’t let them eat it.

KORAL

They’re joking.

PIGGSEY

Piggsey don’t joke about food and venison tasty- DELICIOUS.

Piggsey smacks his lips.

Stunned, bleeding profusely, the deer struggles to its feet...then- CURIOUSLY- its velvet eyes lock onto Koral’s eyes- a plea? Follow me? The deer stumbles into the forest.

CARL (shouts at the deer)

Hay you’re meant to be dead.

.

Koral darts into the van

IN THE VAN- she grabs her canvas satchel and slings it over her shoulder

koral exits the van.

OUTSIDE-

Carl takes out his mobile

CARL (to Piggsey)

Whatyar reckon to the chances of a Chinese

– Bambi got my stomach doing somersaults.

Piggsey sniffs the air-

PIGGSEY (to Carl)

About a mile away.

LEXY (To Carl)

Fuck the Chinese, get me a-

CARL (to Lexy)

Heard you the first time, but food

Comes first.

As Koral follows the deer into the woods-

LEXY

There she goes- Saint FUCKING Koral.

BECKY (to Lexy)

That not nice.

LEXY

Dipshit, haven’t you noticed-

I ain’t nice and I ain’t finished with you.

Not by a long way.

(beat)

You’ll be safer with the wild animals.

Becky bites her fingernails as she stares at the forest.

BECKY (to Lexy)

Can I fetch my torch- please?

INT- WOODS- STARTING TO GET DARK.

Like a modern day Indian tracker, Koral assiduous follows the blood trail. Blinded by her need to find the deer-and soon the night- she doesn’t realize she’s getting lost.

The night creeps closer; a veil of shade obstructs- HIDES the blood droplets...she realizes-

KORAL

Shit.

The night steals the last flecks of light.

THE FOREST: ominous- SINSTER; shadows linger-wait for her next move.

See hears a branch break to her left, right-the deer?

KORAL

Hello... who’s there?

Closer, another branch CRACKS.

KORAL

Who’s there? … I don’t play games-

But she does: catch me if you can.

Branches snap at her, bracken bites.

She stumbles, barely grabs her balance-then she’s off again.

Running.

Blindly, she charges-

A root snags her ankle, a brief SQUEAL before she hits the dirt.

Winded, she checks her ankle: PAINFUL, but luckily not broken-

KORAL (as she feels her ankle)

Lucky girl.

She’s in a clearing and the pale touch of the moon gives her sight.

THE CLEARING: bizarre... a place the forest animals come to die? Teeth exposed in snarling grins, their festering bodies litter it.

Her deer lies among the rotting corpses; its velvet eyes still sparkle, death has not robbed there beauty- yet.

Fear forgotten, Koral takes a digital camera out of her satchel and proficiently photographs the deer, then the rotting animal’s carcasses.

She stoops to get an enhanced angle of a disintegrating FOX’S jawbone, sees-

IN THE CENTRE OF THE CLEARING-scarcely visible, the moss covered tip of a MONOLITH.

THE MONOLITH: alluring, a mystery, covered in exquisite words and crude depictions of a demon (Sabine’s demon).

Koral takes a couple of shots of the stone, stops- she needs to touch it-

INT. FARMHOUSE- CANDLE LIT LIVING ROOM- NIGHT.

Dark billowing shadows STEAL most of the room.

But, in the weak glow of a coal fire, we see Koral wrapped up in a blanket resting on a sofa.

GODFREY (mumbles to himself, but Koral hears)

Demon’s engraved on it...

Sabine’s stone- couldn’t be-

He pokes the fire embers with an iron rod; sparks fly. He turns and stares intensely at Koral-

.

GODFREY

Did you touch the stone?

KORAL

Why...would it matter?

GODFREY

Did you?

IN THE CLEARLING- FLASHBACK-

Koral’s fingers caress the monolith; her brown eyes change to cloudy blue; her body spasms, then she collapses into a loving embrace onto the stone.

The moon fades as Koral dreams of the stone-of a beautiful cool lake it once dwelled in.

END OF FLASHBACK.

IN THE FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM-

KORAL

Why? - It’s only a stone.

GODFREY (spits the words out)

Pray it’s only a stone-

Have you laid flesh on that cursed stone?

Koral see the revulsion on Godfrey’s face and lies-

KORAL

No, no I didn’t touch the bloody stone.

GODFREY

Good- good.

Good, he might say, but Koral’s revelation has hit him: the iron rod shakes in his trembling hand.

KORAL

Why did you call it Sabine’s stone?

GODFREY

I didn’t.

KORAL

I heard you mention the name.

GODFREY

…Sabine’s stone’s a myth. No more.

KORAL

But I found it.

GODFREY

Folklore, you found a stone.

KORAL

The demons etched on it… who was Sabine.

GODFREY

Do you ever give up?

KORAL

Sometimes.

GODFREY (Says it fast, like he wants it over quick)

Sabine was said to be cursed by the stone-

It’s said- he drowned his family in the lake to seal a pact with it.

But grief consumed him and it’s said he destroyed the stone.

(beat)

Another tale for another night.

(beat)

So you found you’re deer.

KORAL

Yes, I found it…

EXT. THE FOREST- THE CLEARING- NIGHT.

Balloons, the colours of the rainbow, billow around the clearing- a dream?

ON KORAL, she wakes, eyes alert; she scans the clearing.

She rises, touches the stone; nothing magical about it, just a worn dirty stone.

One last glance at the deer-

KORAL

Your beauty is captured forever.

EXT- CAMPSITE- THE LAKE- NIGHT.

Seemingly derelict, a stone farmhouse can just be seen on the other side of the lake.

Piggsey and Ryan are putting up tents; Lexy fires wind- up comments at them.

CLOSER TO THE LAKE-

Carl snatches a stone of the ground, scrutinizes it, then tries to skim it across the lake; one miserable bounce and it sinks.

CARL

Bollicks.

He picks another stone up; appreciates its flat surface before letting it rip.

It slaps the lake a couple of times, then sinks.

CARL

Better.

As he bends down to grab another stone: his glasses slip off and the lens cracks on a rock.

CARL

You miserable cunt!

Pissed-off, he boots the rock into the lakes- it bounces.

CARL

You o me more - cunt.

The rock obeys; Carl counts its bounces-

CARL

Two ...three...

Bizarrely, the rock picks up speed- four...five bounces...

CARL

Six...Steven- fucking record!

Eight...NINE- not possible- TEN... then, in the centre of the lake, it stops; it doesn’t sink, but hovers inches above the surface.

CARL

You’ve got to be choking.

He snatches his glasses off, rubs his eyes: the rock is still there resisting gravity-testing reality.

CARL

Sink you freak.

ON THE LAKE- RIPPLES form as the rock tastes the surface and grudgingly sinks.

On the other side of the lake, barely visible, a young girl and woman watch him.

Like statues they wait, then in a sluggish mechanical way: they wave at Carl.

Turning to the others-

CARL

You see that?

They don’t answer: Ryan has trapped Piggsey under the tent's skin; Lexy is chuckling...

EXT. IN THE FOREST- NIGHT.

Motionless, head tilted back, neck veins bulging; Becky’s is mesmerized by “something” hiding in the tree’s murky canopy.

Her mouth frantically forms words, and we get snippets of them-

BECKY

So cold… lonely… stay with you.

KORAL O/S

Becky, who you talking to?

Koral slides up to Becky’s side and gazes up at the canopy.

IN THE CANOPY- a faint breeze gives the trees voices: branches crackle, leafs shiver...then the vague contours of “something”-a monkey? The “something” scuttles deeper into the leafy camouflage.

KORAL

What is it Becks?

BECKY

Ssssssssss

Becky’s hypnotised eyes never leave the treetops, but she whispers:

BECKY (at the treetops)

Don’t go.

Koral raises her camera to take a shot; Becky grabs it.

BECKY (frantic)

No- you’ll scare HER away.

They struggle. Koral rips the camera from Becky, but in doing so, it slices a small cut on Becky’s wrist.

BECKY (crying mixed with words)

Why you do that? I came to look

for you - Lexy was going to get me-

now you hit me!

KORAL

Sorry...i didn’t mean-

Koral fishes a hanky out and dabs at the cut, then ties the hankie around Becky’s wrist.

KORAL

Com’ on, let’s get back-

Coming from the canopy-

GIRL’S VOICE (creepy)

Don’t go.

KORAL (to Becky)

You hear that?

BECKY (still upset)

Hear what?

From the canopy-

GIRL’S VOICE (creepy)

Stay... I’m lonely.

KORAL (to Becky)

You hear it now?

BECKY

I wanno go.

Koral takes the flashlight of Becky and aims it beam at the treetops; Becky grips Koral’s arm.

KORAL

I’m sure I heard… nevermind-

GIRL

I’m here.

High up in a tree, a girl sits on a branch; she’s holding a string which holds a RED BALLOON; the balloon obscures the girl’s face.

KORAL (inexplicably, Koral’s voice echo)

Hello, you

need some help?

ON THE BALLOON- a faint breeze causes it to bobs and weaves, but it always hides the girl’s face.

KORAL (echo)

Hello, I said do you need some help?

Koral looks at the smooth trunk of the tree: there are no climbing branches.

KORAL (echo)

How did you get up there?

BECKY (creepy, slurred)

Floated… she floated.

KORAL (yelps)

Becks, you’re crushing my arm!

Koral looks down at her arm; a bleached white hand, more plastic than skin, grips it.

Slowly, Koral raises her gaze… her RASPING breath- stops.

Koral SCREAMS-

A transitory vision of drowned women: saturated skin flaps crudely sewed together with vines and twigs cover her face; she grins.

EXT.IN THE FOREST- THE CLEARING- NIGHT.

Legs and arms thrashing, Koral jerks out of her nightmare- someone watching her; looking over her shoulder, in the woods, she sees a woman and child staring.

A distressed Becky rushes into the clearing.

BECKY

Why did you leave me?

Koral turns towards Becky, and then quickly glances back over shoulder: the woman and child have gone.

KORAL

Leave you?

BECKY

You left me. With her.

KORAL

Her?

BECKY

She wouldn’t let me go. I had too…

KORAL

Becks calm down, you’re not making sense.

Now, who wouldn’t let you go?

BECKY

The girl, the girl with the balloon.

KORAL

But that was a dream- how do you know my dream?

BECKY

Dream?

Becky raises her arm and pushes hair away from her eyes; tied round her wrist is Koral’s hankie.

EXT- THE LAKE- CAMPSIGHT-NIGHT.

A beat box blasts out dance music.

On a sandy shore, which descends into the lake, six tents have been pitched up: Lexy’s tent is the largest among them.

ON-an intoxicated Piggesy as he vaults a burning pile of salvage wood; red tongues of flames taste him.

He falls, rolls to his feet and proceeds to dance round it like a crazy Red Indian.

PIGGSEY O/S

Hey now now now hey now now.

Ryan and Lexy are sitting and watching him.

Next to them, Carl picks up pebbles and drops them onto the sandy ground; each time they hit the ground a puzzled expression comes on his face: as if he expects them to levitate.

RYAN (to Lexy)

Lexy babes, you didn’t mean what you said earlier…

you know, about not wanting to meet us- me

again?

LEXY (to Ryan)

Dam right I did.

RYAN (to Lexy)

Arrrr… O.K. that’s cool.

KORAL (to Ryan)

Don’t kid yourself “babes”- you ain’t special.

Piggsey stops dancing and stares at the trio.

PIGGSEY

Is Piggsey the only one who

knows how to have fun?

Always ready to party, Lexy gets up; she gives Ryan a fake smile.

LEXY

I’m here- give it time, I might…

don’t get your hopes up.

Cat like, she struts over to Piggsey and starts to dance. This girl can move- she got all. She gyrates- teases; her eyes throw smouldering, mocking, glances at Ryan.

Carl drops another pebble.

RYAN (to Carl)

She’s a tiger.

Carl drops another stone.

CARL

She’s got claws- bit too sharp for you.

RYAN

Forget mate. I hate say -

no I’m happy to say it- you’ve lucked out;

I specialize in taming tigers.

Carl drops another pebble.

CARL

That so.

Carl concentrates on another pebble as it falls.

RYAN

What’s with the rocks?

CARL

I duno… something wrong with them.

(beat)

Some float.

RYAN

Float? You haven’t changed,

still fuckin crazy, but I hope we’re still mates?

CARL

For now.

RYAN

What’s that mean?

Koral and Becky arrive back in the camp. Becky gives Lexy a nervous glance.

KORAL (to Becky)

She not going to touch you, I promise.

KORAL (To Ryan)

This ain’t our campsite.

CARL (to Koral)

Well get used to it.

Koral takes her mobile out-

RYAN

Koral don’t bother-

fuckin mobiles can’t grab a signals

round here.

KORAL (to Ryan)

What about the spare tyre?

RYAN

It’s silly time to be budging a wheel.

(beat)

I’ve put your tent up- so a thank you Ryan would be nice.

KORAL (looks at the tents)

There too close to the lake.

Ryan please… Becky had a scare and we want to leave.

RYAN (to Becky)

Lexy was joking.

KORAL

Not Lexy… she- look you going to help us? Please.

Ryan drains his bottle of beer, flings it over his head, and then runs his fingers threw his hair-

RYAN

I love to, but not tonight- Becks be sound.

Ryan gets up and invades Lexy’s personal space; his cocky dance moves match hers.

ON CARL- he picks up another pebble and drops it.

KORAL

How about you Carl, will you gives a hand?

CARL

No chance. I like it here… I like it a lot.

Carl gets up, goes to the river and throws the stone into it.

BECKY (TO Koral)

What about Piggsey?

KORAL (to Becky)

It will be all right-

come on let’s get some iodine on that.

EXT. THE LAKE- CAMPSITE- LATER.

Lexy and Ryan are having a slow dance. Carl, bizarrely, mimics them.

Piggsey, Koral and Becky are lying down in the sand staring at the stars.

PIGGSEY (to Koral, teasing)

You know, don’t you, I’ve always liked you,

ever since you first rolled up at All Saints.

I mean love you, it doesn’t matter to me that you’re not as hot as Lexy-

you’re still my number one.

KORAL

Thanks Piggsey that really cheered me up.

PIGGSEY

I knew it would. I knew it would.

Piggsey takes a gulp of his beer.

PIGGSEY (toasts)

To childhood friends- the best you

ever get.

Koral rolls over, takes her camera out and then a picture of Piggsey.

KORAL

The best.

Ryan and Lexy, plonk themselves down next to Piggsey and Koral.

LEXY (To Becky)

So the animals didn’t fuck you- pity.

PIGGSEY (to Lexy)

Why did you turn out so mean?

LEXY

Mean, you haven’t seen mean.

Piggsey shakes his head.

PIGGESY (to the group)

A game, we need a game to lighten Lexy’s mood.

(to Lexy)

You up for some truth or dare?

BECKY (excited)

Double dare, love kisses or promises.

Count me in.

Carl, eyes closed, is still dancing.

PIGGSEY (shouts at Carl)

Your dates fucked off.

Piggsey grabs an empty Bootle of beer, the rest of the group sit down in a circle.

Piggsey spins the bottle; it rockets around and finally stops; it’s pointing at Lexy.

PIGGESY (to Lexy)

TRUTH- do you secretly fantasize about

Piggy sex- now that to easy- you’re bound to.

mmmm... are you up for a Piggy sex session tonight?

LEXY

Sure, bring it on turtle dick.

ON THE CAMERA’S VIEWFINER- Koral is looking at pictures of their camping trip.

Lexy spins the bottle...it ends up pointing at Ryan.

LEXY (to Ryan)

DARE- kiss Carl.

RYAN

It ain’t happening.

LEXY

You know you want to- I want see it.

RYAN

Bitch!

A grin plastered over his face, Ryan grabs Carl; he plants a smacker on Carl’s forehead; Carl- in a rage- twists his head and is about to throw a punch.

RYAN (holding up his hands)

Chill mate, it’s joke- I

don’t want your ass.

ON KORAL’S VIEW FINDER- images of the dead deer, the animal’s corpses, then Sabine’s stone.

Carl snatches the bottle and spins it.

RYAN (to Carl)

It’s my go!

CARL (to Ryan)

Toooo late, gayboy.

The bottle ends up pointing at Becky.

CARL (to Becky)

DARE- Becky babes, get your tits out.

BECKY

Carl… that’s dirty.

KORAL (to Becky, looking at her)

You don’t have to do it.

CARL

DOUBLE dare you- you have to do it’s a

double dare.

In a flash, Becky’s jerks her tee shirt up and down.

PIGGSEY

Suckable- defo.

BECKY (to Carl)

No more dirty stuff.

Koral goes back to looking in her view finder-

ON KORAL’S VIEWFINDER- NEXT PICTURE- is an empty tree branch.

Becky spins the bottle.

ON KORAL’S VIEWFINDER- NEXT PICTURE- a red balloon has been tied to a tree branch.

Koral lifts the camera closer to her face; the balloon pops.

ON Lexy: the bottle is pointing at her.

BECKY (to Lexy)

LOVE- do you love Ryan?

LEXY

SNORTS- that’s easy, no! Never going to happen.

ON KORAL’S VIEWFINDER- NEXT PICTURE- the top part is distorted, but on the bottom we see the tree branch and a girl’s decomposed legs hanging over it.

ON Lexy- she spins the bottle.

ON KORAL’S VIEWFINDER- NEXT PICTURE- Koral’s face twisted into nightmarish scream.

ON KORAL’S VIEWFINDER- NEXT PICTURE-The drowned women’s face.

Koral jumps and drop the camera as Carl taps her on the shoulder.

CARL

Your it.

KORAL

I’m going-

She scrambles to her feet; Piggsey stumbles to his feet and grabs her.

PIGGSEY

Koral- what’s wrong?

KORAL

The camera…I saw… something- I saw a woman on it.

Ryan picks up the camera it shows a smiling picture of Koral.

RYAN (shows her the picture)

Just you Koral, you and your sexy smile.

LEXY (to Ryan)

Sexy, hur- are you blind?

KORAL

I saw, I saw…

CARL

Flashbacks- I get them all the time.

PIGGSEY (to Koral)

No more ghost stories for you- I can be a dickhead at times.

I’m going aftoo sit down, you coming?

Koral and Piggsey sit back down.

LEXY (to Koral)

SECRET- and I don’t want some boring shit.

PIGGSEY (to Lexy)

She just gave you a secret- she sees dead people.

LEXY (to Koral)

I said- SECRET! I want a fuckin secret!

KORAL

I...I can’t swim.

LEXY

That’s a secret?

You’re so dull. My god you’re

so fuckin dull.

Lexy goes to pick up the bottle, but Piggsey grabs it.

PIGGSEY (to Lexy)

You had your turn, it’s Koral now.

KORAL

I don’t-

PIGGSEY (to Koral)

Have a go- pay the mean bitch back.

Koral reluctantly spins the bottle.

It spins and spins, when it stops- it’s pointing at Lexy.

KORAL (to Lexy)

… Secret.

LEXY

I like being strangled- when

I fuck. In fact I love it.

PIGGESY

Now that’s something Piggsey needs to check out.

RYAN (to Piggsey)

You dream with your eyes open.

Lexy takes a large gulp of her beer, then spins the bottle.

THE BOTTLE slows; knows it going to stop on Piggsey, jerks a couple of places to point at Ryan.

LEXY (to Ryan)

PROMISE- throw Koral in the lake.

RYAN (to Lexy)

Funny - you just heard her-

she can’t swim.

LEXY (to Ryan)

UN- fucking- lucky.

Lexy whispers something in Ryan’s ear-

RYAN

Serious?

Lexy’s tongue darts out as she licks her lips; Ryan takes the bait.

Ryan grabs the protesting Koral in a fireman’s lift, and charges for the lake.

KORAL (pleads and jokes)

Ryan, put me down...

But as she nears the lake, panic sets in; possessed, she kicks, punches and SCREAMS at him.

RYAN

Chill, you’re only going in the shallows.

Just as he is pitching her in, Piggesy grabs Koral and puts her down on the sand.

PIGGSEY (to Ryan)

Piggsey all about fun, but this ani’t funny-

He pushes Ryan into the lake.

PIGGSEY

That is.

Ryan spits a mouth fall of water out, then starts to swim away from the shore.

RYAN (to Lexy)

You still o me!

Piggsey and Carl dive bomb into the water and start to splash about.

Lexy strips down-

LEXY (to Lexy and Becky)

You two should marry.

Lexy dives into the water.

Koral watches them frolicking; a sad smile on her face.

INT. FARMHOUSE- CANDLE LIT LIVING ROOM-NIGHT.

Godfrey stubs his roll-up out in ashtray brimming with nubs. He gives Koral a look of disbelief-

GODFREY

I thought Piggsey was the one who

made up ghost stories.

KORAL

It’s not a story.

GODFREY (guffaws)

Ghostly apparition on your camera?

You expect me to believe that? Look you dried out, about

time to trot back to your friends.

KORAL

You have to believe me.

GODFREY

Do I. Why. So you and your friends can

have a good giggle at me.

KORAL (Ernest)

I’m not lying.

GODFREY

Your camera, let’s be havin it.

KORAL

Its damage, it must be

by the water, so you won’t see anything.

GODFREY

I said I won’t to see your camera.

Reluctantly, Koral opens her satchel bag and takes the camera out.

KORAL

It’s broke, please believe me.

Godfrey grabs the camera and inspects it-

GODFREY

Bone dry.

He presses the on button.

KORAL

Please.

The green light comes on. Godfrey raises his eyebrows-

GODFREY

Been in the water. You said.

KORAL

It shouldn’t…

Godfrey looks into the view finder-

ON GODFREY’S FACE- his bemused expression evaporates, his eyes hardened- become DANGEROUS.

ON THE VIEWFINDER- a picture of Godfrey.

He throws the camera; it SMASHES against the wall; Koral cowers.

GODFREY

Who sent you?

KORAL

Sent me?

Godfrey whole body shakes; he gets up and grabs Koral by the throat.

GODFREY

I said- who sent you? Police. Are you a private detective?

KORAL (starts to choke)

No one sent me.

GODFREY

Liar!

KORAL (splutters)

Please.

Godfrey relaxes his grip, but doesn’t let go.

GODFREY

Spy, who sent you?

KORAL

Please, I don’t understand.

Godfrey releases her; Koral curls up into a protective ball.

GODFREY (shouts)

They left me- I’ve have no secrets!

KORAL

Left you?

Godfrey’s shadow menaces Koral.

GODFREY

Left me.

He grabs her by the throat and squeezes; Koral chokes then loses consciousness.

FADE TO A BLUE SCREEN.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE LAKE- DARK WITH TINTS OF LIGHT.

In the murky water we can just make out the contours of two figures.

As we glide closer to them the distinct shape of woman and young girl form; they sway, almost dance to an invisible beat.

Closer still, their eyes are closed; their mouths are open in silent SCREAMS.

Now within touching distance- their eyes spring open.

GODFREY O/S

Wake up bitch.

KORAL

Please, please- I will…

EXT- PATH THAT BORDERS THE LAKE-NIGHT.

A pea size rowing boat has been beached on the sand.

Koral is perched on a craggy tree stump; deep in thought, she stares blankly out over the lake.

A SPLASH disturbs her.

ON THE LAKE- a bony child’s hand reaches out the water.

Koral slides of the stump and goes to the lake.

She notices tiny footprints in the sand which lead to an unruly mass of reeds.

She follows the trail.

ON THE REEDS- Koral unravels a few CRACKLING strands to reveal, half submerged in grimy mud, a DOLL. She seizes its soiled hand and gently liberates from the odious, SUCKING mud.

ON THE DOLL’S FACE: distorted, a grotesque eye stares at Koral.

EXT. OAK TREE- CLOSE TO THE RIVER- DAY- FLASHBACK.

A contented Koral (9) swings on a plank suspended from an ancient oak tree. She clutches a DOLL to her chest, and sings a lullaby to it.

Behind her, two girls- TWINS watch her.

THE TWINS: her foster sisters: angelic, same age as Koral, but “hard to put your finger on it”- maybe the calculating, callous eyes- YEARS OLDER.

Vicious scrunched GINGER HAIR: like an insects warning colours- rides their backs.

They exchange spiteful glances and then creep closer to Koral.

SECONDS LATER: the twins stand each side of Koral.

THE TWINS (together)

Lovely doll, what’s her name?

KORAL

Lucy Lou.

THE TWINS

Arrrrrrrr, lovly name.

The twins tenderly stroke the doll’s hair.

THE TWINS

Can Lucy swim?

Koral vigorously shakes her head.

THE TWINS (to the doll)

Lucy Lou, we’re going to teach you to swim.

KORAL

Lucy doesn’t like water.

The twins grip clumps of the doll’s hair and yank it out of Korla’s hands.

THE TWINS

But, she needs to learn.

END OF FLASHBACK-

EXT. PATH NEAR THE LAKE- NIGHT.

Koral fences of a tear; refuses to be a child again, but it breaks through.

KORAL (to the doll)

So sad.

ON THE DOLL: slush spills from its mouth... it GURGLES-

DOLL

Mummy, mummy why did you drown me?

Korla drops the dreadful doll- It legs kick out and its tiny hands pound the sand.

DOLL

Mummy, mummy!

Drown me!

EXT- CAMPSITE- THE LAKE- NIGHT.

In her pants and tee shirt, Becky dips her foot into the lake.

ON LEXY’S TENT- a light comes on and the silhouettes of a girl, woman and a doll can be seen can. The doll sits between the other two as they play the “pat a cake, pat a cake” game.

Becky sees the silhouettes.

She creeps up to the tent; the silhouette’s heads turn; they stare at Becky as if they can see straight through the fabric of the tent.

The silhouettes turn away and they continue with their game.

BECKY (at the silhouettes)

What you doing in there? Lexy will kill you if she

catches you.

The silhouette of the DOLL gets up and tip- toes to the fabric of the tent; indentations form as it presses it head against it.

GIRL O/S

Becky- you want to play a game?

BECKY

How do you know my name?

(beat)

What kind of game?

GIRL O/S

A scary game.

The light in the tent goes out.

ON THE LAKE-

Eyes closed, Carl treads water.

Troubled lines break on his forehead as hears Lexy’s joyful SQUEALS.

CARL (shouts)

You’re wrecking my peace.

LEXY O/S

It’s called-FUN.

Water is splashed onto Car’s face; he frowns and squeezes his eyes tighter.

CARL

I can wait for mine.

LEXY O/S

Why wait.

The sounds of Lexy frolicking in the lake.

CARL

What about lover boy?

RYAN O/S

Relax- Lexy a big enough girl

to do us both.

Whaty say bud?

LEXY O/S

I want you both. Now.

Carl opens his eyes; craning his neck, he can just make out the dim forms of Lexy, Piggsey and Ryan on the other side of the lake- too far away to have been speaking to him.

CARL

Errrrr.

EXT. THE LAKE- CAMPSITE- NIGHT.

Becky nervously rubs her thighs as she stands outside Lexy’s dark tent.

BECKY

I’m still here.

GIRL O/S

Ready or not.

ON THE TENT- a light comes on and the silhouette of an OLD TROLL appears; Becky jumps a foot back.

The light in the tent flickers and the troll silhouette is replaced by a woman’s silhouette.

WOMAN SILHOUETTE O/S

Becky get your arse in the tent now!

BECKY (recognizes the voice)

Mum, is that you?

WOMAN SILHOUETTE O/S

I’ve told once, do I need to repeat myself-

Do you want me to hurt you?

BECKY

Mum …I’ve miss you so much.

Becky staggers to the tent’s entrance- a gnarled hand yanks her inside.

The light flickers and the silhouette of the TROLL strangle Becky.

The light in the tent goes out.

EXT. THE LAKE- NIGHT.

Carl can just make out the figures of Piggsey, Ryan and Lexy getting out the lake.

Using sluggish front crawl strokes, Carl makes his way to shore- to safety.

He stops; no closer to shore- as if his numerous strokes have been stolen.

CARL (to the water)

Freaky- you don’t want me to leave- o.k.

If he thought that was freaky- it wasn’t compared to his “floating stone” surfacing inches from his face.

He grabs it; checks it authenticity- his stone, no doubts about it.

He rests it on the water; it floats.

CARL

Rocks that float- I’ve seen it; what

else you got?

RIPPLES skim the surface as a fist sized rock breaks through.

Perplexed, Carl grabs the new rock; he notices a red yarn tied round it which descends back into the murky depths like a fishing line.

Intrigued, he reels the thread in to find tied at the end is a GOLD bracelet.

Rubbing mud off it, he reads the inscription: RUTH-

CARL

Ruth- you’re a sweetie.

(To the lake)

Gimme some more.

INT. LEXY’S TENT- NIGHT.

Lexy is looking in a mirror as she puts her lipstick on.

Suddenly, as if someone had switched light on outside, the fabric of her tent GLOWS.

The grey silhouette of a girl runs by her tent; she’s followed by a dog; the dog leaps into the air and floats back down.

Lexy touches the fabric- it’s wet.

Becky’s silhouette comes into view; she stops and arranges her hair: as if she’s using the tent as a mirror.

BECKY O/S

They won’t let me leave…

The dog and girl’s silhouettes join her.

Becky’s silhouette begins to blow a bubble gum bubble; bigger… bigger, then the bubble floats away from her face like a balloon.

BECKY O/S

They just won’t let me go…

LEXY

I let you fuckin go-

The tent material loses its glow.

In her mirror, Lexy sees Becky’s contorted face.

BECKY O/S

I’m dead and you’ll be soon.

Lexy spins around; sees Becky lifeless body sink to the floor.

EXT- THE LAKE- NIGHT.

Another rock breaks through.

Driven by greed- Carl has stopped rationalizing the rocks behaviour; he just grabs it: there’s a blue thread tied round it.

Carl hauls his booty up.

The lake surface splinters as a child’s TEDDY breaks through.

Carl grabs it, sees it has a bizarre set of razor sharp teeth.

CARL (to the water)

Don’t fuck with me-

The grubby teddy gets short sift as Carl flings it back into the water.

CARL

Gold baby- Carl splashes the water-

I want gold.

BENEATH THE SURFACE- teddy glides back into the blinding darkness of the soulless lake.

ON THE SURFACE- another rock, the size of a child’s head, breaks through.

EXT. THE LAKE –CAMPSITE- NIGHT.

Koral races into the campsite; she gives an anxious look over her shoulder- no scary doll is following her.

Piggsey rushes up to meet Koral.

KORAL (to Piggsey)

I’m leaving. Now! Where’s Becks?

I said; notices his sombre face- what’s happen?

PIGGSEY

Becky-

KORAL

She all right?

PIGGSEY

No… she’s…

Ryan and Lexy walk up to her.

LEXY

-Dead.

KORAL (to Lexy)

Don’t kid -it ain’t amusing Lexy.

LEXY

Check the stiff for yourself. She

stinking my tent up.

Koral sees Lexy isn’t joking; pushes past her and barges into Lexy’s tent.

PIGGSEY (to Koral)

You don’t need to see her.

IN LEXY’S TENT-

It’s a grisly sight, but Koral bends down and strokes Becky’s wet hair.

She looks at her wet fingers and then rotates the digits together.

KORAL

Fucking bitch!

OUTSIDE THE TENT- Koral bursts through the entrance.

KORAL (to Lexy)

Bitch, what you do to her?

LEXY

Don’t blame me, I’ve didn’t touched the dipshit.

She just dropped dead on me.

KORAL

Dipshit, she’s worth ten of you.

LEXY

Don’t you mean, was?

Koral grabs Lexy by the throat and throttles her.

KORAL (to Lexy)

Feel good.

Piggsey and Ryan pull Koral of Lexy.

KORAL (to Lexy)

You drown her over a piece of

fuckin gum on your nails.

Koral storms off up the dirt track.

PIGGSEY

Wait for the morning,-Koral you’ll get lost.

LEXY

Let the psycho bitch go!

ON THE LAKE-

A diverse mixes of rocks now float on its surface.

Carl has just brought to the surface his latest plunder: a hemp sack.

THE SACK: tied at the top with a crude knot; Carl’s greedy fingers work at it.

The sack becomes spasmodic; “something” definitely wants to get out.

Carl, as if in a trance, frees the knot.

He opens it.

He peers in.

CARL (as he throws the sack away from him)

Fuck.

ON THE SACK: a hand- a CLAW, black as tar- reaches out.

And he’s swimming- fuck finesse; it’s a do or dies scramble for the bank.

Carl knows he’s toast as the something seizes his leg; he wrenches his mouth open, but the SCREAM is suffocated as water sloshes in.

He goes under.

We watch Carl’s terrified face sink deeper...deeper...into the murky depths.

The lake is silent...then a GASPING Carl surfaces.

He anxiously checks his leg; a stout rope has been tied around his ankle.

He frantically looks around.

ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE LAKE- a girl and woman appear to be standing on the water as they wave at him.

CARL (shouts)

Help me.

Suddenly, all the rocks sink.

Carl knows what’s about to happen; he claws at the binding as it becomes taut.

CARL

Nooooo-

Carl is yanked under.

EXT. THE PATH- NIGHT.

A panting Piggsey catches up with Koral.

KORAL

I don’t need company.

PIGGSEY

You’ll won’t know I’m here.

They walk in silence.

KORAL

Poor Becky… she wouldn’t harm a fly- that-

PIGGSEY

Bitch, granted she’s that... but she didn’t touch Becky; she

was with me and Ryan.

KORAL

Then how did she drown, how she get into Lexy’s tent?

What did Lexy say?

PIGGSEY

I reckon she on gear- she must be, she told

some bullshit- look I don’t believe what she said, but

she didn’t drown Becky.

KORAL

What did she say? I want to hear it?

PIGGSEY

Trust me you don’t - you see that?

Piggsey points out over the lake.

PIGGSEY

Wait. It’s gone under.

Rooted to the spot, hand still pointing-

PIGGSEY

It got to breath.

EXT. CAMPSITE- THE LAKE- NIGHT.

Lexy and Ryan are looking out over the lake.

RYAN

I can’t see him.

(shouts)

Carl, Carl.

LEXY

Maybe he’s drowned as well.

RYAN

Lexy, what’s wrong with you?

LEXY

Wrong? Why should I care about Carl?

RYAN

Because he’s your friend.

Lexy struts off.

EXT- THE PATH- NIGHT.

Piggsey has been holding his breath; he looks like he’s about to faint.

KORAL

Why you holding your breath?

Piggsey gulps a mouthful of air, as he scans the lake.

PIGGSEY

Must have submarine lungs.

KORAL

You know what I think? We’ve both been seeing things.

PIGGSEY

It was there... it rolled.

They link arms and stroll down the lane.

ON THE WATER: something breaks through; all knotted mangy fur and rigid limbs this animal in the last stages of rigor 'mortis. DEAD it defiantly is, but it wants to play and does a hideous roll. Roll finished it lets out a waterlogged bark- it’s a DEAD DOG.

ON THE TRAIL:

PIGGSEY

It could have been an otter...

they stay under for ages.

KORAL

Otters aside, what did Lexy say?

Piggsey hand jerks up.

PIGGSEY

It’s back.

Kora’sl eyes search the water; she sees it. A shape- its head - pokes out the water. The night protects them, camouflages its features.

The rigid legs break through as it does another playful roll.

KORAL

It’s playing… what is it?

The dog gives a guttural bark, and then submerges.

PIGGSEY

Was that a bark?

Closer to shore- too them; the dog bobs up, sees them, and then dips back under the water.

KORAL

Dogs just don’t do that.

EXT. THE LAKE- CAMPSITE- NIGHT.

ON THEIR REFLECTION- Ryan throws a stone into the lake, Lexy comes up and stands by his side.

LEXY

I’m sorry about what I just said.

RYAN

That so.

LEXY

Did you hear me? I said I’m sorry- it’s

not easy for me to say, you know.

Ryan looks at her.

RYAN

You don’t need to apologise.

LEXY

And I’m sorry about calling you lot losers…I’m the

only loser.

RYAN

No you’re not, you’re gorgeous.

LEXY

Ryan you don’t know.

(beat)

After I left the children’s home, I bounced

from one family to the next…then…then I fell in

with the wrong crowd…

Lexy holds her painted nails out in front of her.

LEXY

A dirty old punter paid for these.

Ryan puts his arm around her; Lexy smiles.

RYAN

That’s the past, don’t let it ruin you,

you’re with friends now.

LEXY

Make a wish.

She drops a stone into the water.

IN THE RIPPLES- we see the reflections of Ryan and Lexy, but as they start to dissipate the image of Lexy amalgamates into the grinning reflection of the drowned woman.

The drown girl comes into view and grabs Ryan’s other hand.

EXT. THE TRAIL - NIGHT.

Closer to the bank, now only twenty feet ahead of them, the DOG waits.

KORAL

It’s like it’s waiting for us.

The dog bares its fangs as a GROWL gushes from it.

Piggsey searches the ground; grabs a stick and makes a threatening move towards the dog.

PIGGSEY

Come on then boy.

KORAL

Leave it Piggsey.

Piggsey charges; stops dead in his track as the dog submerges, but this is not what has caused his halt: hanging from the branches of a tree is a tattered Confederate flag- Piggsey’s confederate flag from his ghost tale.

PIGGSEY

Can’t be.

He touches the flag, rubs the fabric between his fingers and then heads into the woods.

KORAL

Piggsey.

Koral goes to stop him; stands on a rotten dog collar, picks it up and reads the inscription-

KORAL

Echo-

EXT. FIELDS- FLASHBACK- DAY.

It’s a hot summer day.

A joyful Koral chases a scrawny mutt through golden fields.

KORAL

Echo, echo.

The dog bounds over to her; she hugs it… ruffles its ears.

THE TWINS O/S

Echo, echo.

It’s wagging tail stops and a soft growl rumbles from its throat.

THE TWINS

Bad dog. You need a lesson.

END OF FLASHBACK.

ON THE PATHWAY:

Koral hesitates... the dog surfaces closer to her- she heads into the woods.

INT. FARMHOUSE- LIVING ROOM- NIGHT.

Godfrey is taking stuff out of a large storage box: a brush, colouring books, children’s jewellery, a photo album, A CHILD’S DOLL and finally a dog collar: it has the name tag ECHO.

Godfrey swigs straight from a new full bottle of whisky.

Koral touches her throat.

GODFREY

I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry…

I didn’t mean to hurt you.

The photo threw me, I fought you...now

I know.

He takes another swig.

KORAL

You’re not going hurt me again, are you?

GODFREY

I won’t ever hurt you again- I promise.

(beat)

I’ve missed you so much.

KORAL

Missed me?

GODFREY

Sorry, sorry, I’ve got something for you.

Godfrey opens the photo album and passes it to Koral- it shows a picture of Emily.

Koral touches the photo of Emily.

GODFREY

You changed, grow.

KORAL

I don’t understand.

GODFREY (winks at Koral)

Echo, Lucy Lou.

(Of Koral’s puzzled expression)

I play along.

Godfrey reaches for his whiskey bottle.

KORAL

Let me, I put it in a glass.

She takes the bottle of him and goes into the kitchen.

IN THE KITCHEN-

Koral unbolts the heavy lock of the back door.

KORAL

You have any ice?

GODFREY O/S

I get it.

KORAL

No. no I’ve got it

Koral steps back from the back door and goes to the fridge.

IN THE LIVING ROOM-

Koral enters, she gives Godfrey his drink.

KORAL

That’s better.

GODFREY

The story… you didn’t need a story to see me.

KORAL

It not a story and I still don’t know how I

got out the water.

Godfrey gives her the wink again.

KORAL

Piggsey found his tent.

EXT- IN THE WOODS- NIGHT.

A gobsmacked Piggsey shakes his head as he stares at a tent.

PIGGSEY (at the tent)

Where did you come from?

It’s obvious to use, from Piggsey expression, that this is the tent Piggsey visualized in his ghost story.

He unzips the tent’s entrance.

Koral arrives-

KORAL

Piggsey please- I didn’t tell before… but-

PIGGSEY

It’s only a deserted tent…I just need to know if…

Piggsey is halfway in the tent.

PIGGSEY

Ahoy anyone home?

(to koral as he pokes his head out)

Nobody’s home-

KORAL

Please don’t go in.

STACY O/S (muffled)

That you Billy?

Piggsey gives Koral a look of disbelief then enters the tent.

IN THE TENT-

Piggsey kneels on the now blooded “JAMES DEAN” pillow.

In the sharp glare of his flashlight, he sees the blood skid marks on the canvas roof.

At the far end of the tent, the sleeping bag jerks- defiantly something in it.

PIGGSEY

Stacy??

The sleeping bag shudders.

Piggsey creeps closer- the sleeping bag convulses.

STACY O/S (unemotionally sings)

99 red balloons floating in…

Piggsey wrenches the sleeping bag open: mounds of rotted leafs tumble out.

He stares; then a sinister, barely a whisper-

STACY O/S

99 red balloons go byyyy…

His hand shakes, as it brushes through the leaves- finds the RED BALLOON, deflated like a pancake.

He picks it up- sees Stacy’s shrunken face in it; Stacy tries to grin-

STACY

Helloooo Piggsey.

OUTSIDE THE TENT-

Screeching like his name sake, Piggsey bolts out of the tent, serves round Koral, and hurtles into the forest.

KORAL

Piggsey!

STACY O/S

Koral? That you?

EXT. CREEPY FOREST- NIGHT.

Piggsey looks like he is on the verge of a heart attack as he smashes through adhesive bracken.

PIGGSEY

No more fuckin ghost stories.

Bent over, puffing, Piggsey stops at massive gnarled oak.

He boots the tree.

PIGGSEY

Give me concrete any day.

Through the bushes he sees a campfire.

PIGGSEY

It’s my shity tale…

do you think I’m going to fall for that?

He folds his arms and leans back against a tree.

A balloon floats by.

A drop of water hits his forehead; Piggsey wipes it away.

In front of him, now stands a girl.

PIGGSEY

Where did you come from?

GIRL

I’ve lost my dog. Have you seen him?

PIGGSEY

A dog? No I haven’t seen a dog- where your

parents.

GIRL

Echo.

GROWLING, from above him, Piggsey slowly looks up, sees the decomposing dog from the lake.

PIGGSEY

Good doggie.

It pounces on him.

EXT. CAMPSITE- NIGHT.

Lexy is throwing stones into the lake.

Koral arrives back.

KORAL

You seen Piggsey?

Ryan, Carl?

LEXY

Fuck knows- I ani’t there keepers.

KORAL

Lexy we need to leave- we’re in danger,

will you help me fix the tyre?

LEXY

What’s it now drama queen?

More ghosts on the camera?

KORAL

It’s everthink- we need to go!

LEXY

Enjoy changing the tyre.

KORAL

Fucking bitch…stay- you deserve it.

EXT. AT THE VAN- NIGHT.

Koral is trying to change the wheel.

The clamp SQUEALS as it starts to sink into the rusty underbelly of the van.

KORAL

Piece of rust.

Lexy saunters over.

LEXY

That Carl for you- cheap shit… fucked off

and left us.

The van sinks deeper into the jack and Koral throws the wheel brace away.

KORAL

That’s it, I can’t…

A light comes on in the farmhouse across the lake.

LEXY (points at the farmhouse)

Shoud have learned to swim.

EXT, PATHWAY- LAKE- NIGHT.

A red balloon has now been tethered to the boat it bobs in the wind; Koral snaps its thread and it drifts into the night.

KORAL

Just a balloon.

Becky struggles to drag the boat to the lake.

KORAL

Can you help me?

LEXY

My nails- fuck it I need a bed.

They drag the boat into the water.

Lexy and Koral clamber into it, there’s only one oar.

LEXY

It’s leaking.

KORAL

It will last.

Koral uses the oar to push the boat away from the river.

HALFWAY ACROSS THE LAKE-

On the far side of the bank, Lexy can just make out the silhouettes of a woman and child; arms weighted in treacle, they wave at her.

LEXY

We got a welcome PARTY.

ON THE WOMAN AND CHILD-

Head bowed THE PHANTOM GIRL glides over the water; her mouldered trainers float inches above the surface.

Her decomposed MOTHER joins her.

LEXY

There floating?

As the apparitions glide closer, Lexy gets to see nightmarish state of them.

LEXY

Fuck- get me back!

Lexy tries to wrestle the oar of Koral; water pours into the boat.

KORAL

You’ll sink us.

LEXY

Give me the fuckin oar!

As Lexy yanks on it, Koral lets go off the oar and an overbalanced Lexy spills into the water.

LEXY

Bitch.

Lexy plunges under the water.

The lake is silent; a few ripples the only sign Lexy had been there.

KORAL

Lexy.

The boat begins to rock.

Faster and faster, water cascades into it.

KORAL

Please- I don’t want to drown.

Faster, the boat rocks, then it CRACKS as split cuts it into half.

The boat and Koral sink.

Koral gasps for breath as she surfaces, arms flailing; she slips back under the water.

INT. FARMHOUSE- LIVING ROOM- MORNING.

Birds chirp, Koral goes to the curtains and opens them.

She stares out the widow, a strange smile on her face.

Godfrey watches her.

GODFREY

You didn’t finish it. No matter.

Koral dips her fingers in a glass of water and smothers the candle’s wick with her glistening fingers.

KORAL

I finish it…give me a moment.

GODFREY

You weren’t in the water- I know.

KORAL

Do you.

Godfrey tries to get out of his chair, but his limbs won’t obey him; Koral GIGGLES.

GODFREY

What wrong with me?

She dips her fingers in the water, and then sprinkles Godfrey’s face with droplets.

KORAL

What wrong with you? Good question.

(beat)

One last story- then you might get what’s wrong with you.

(beat)

It was my birthday- and “daddy” had given me my

present.

EXT. THE LAKE- FLASHBACK-DAY.

A sad Koral touches her bruised face; a red balloon is tied around her wrist.

She sits in the same boat which Lexy and Koral tried to cross the lake in.

Facing her are the twins; they each have an oar and are rowing to the centre of the lake.

KORAL V/O

My farther had a boat; he would fish on the lake-

when he wasn’t drunk…

The boat glides to a halt, the twins exchange mischievous glances.

KORAL V/O

He never taught me to swim…

he didn’t know how to.

One of the twins splashes the water with an oar.

THE TWINS

Do you like your birthday

present?

Koral stares at them, her bottle lip quivers...close to tears-

KORAL

No, I want to go home.

THE TWINS

Soon... but first you need to fetch your preezie.

KORAL

Where’s it?

THE TWINS

We hid it in the water.

KORAL V/O

The twins…the twins had a fascination- a love

of the lake- of water.

Koral scans the lake.

KORAL

I can’t swim.

THE TWINS

Tut, tut, tut...we teach you.

The twins stand up and start to rock the boat.

KORAL V/O (cont’d)

You see I was there latest exercise in

pleasure of drowning… my doll, my dog, now me.

Faster and faster -water begins to slip over the side.

KORAL

Stop it. Stop it.

THE TWINS

Stop it, stop it.

More water SLOSHES in.

KORAL

Please.

Not a chance, giggling wildly; the twins capsize the boat.

IN THE WATER-

Koral sinks, seconds later, GASPING for breath, she surfaces.

Arms swinging violently, she lunges for the capsized boat and tries to cling to it.

Her hands slip and she sinks.

ON THE LAKE-

Tranquil.

Air bubbles as Koral’s last breath breaks the surface.

We hold on the surface as a red balloon breaches it.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. FARMHOUSE-

GODFREY

I’m so sorry; I didn’t ever want to hurt you Emily?

KORAL

Emily?

Koral takes out a gold bracelet with the name RUTH on it; she drops it on Godfrey’s lap.

GODFREY

I knew it, you changed. Matured.

KORAL

Have I.

Godfrey struggles to get up- fails.

KORAL

You’re wasting your time- I put enough tranquillisers

to stun a horse, in your whiskey.

GODFREY

What? Why?

KORAL

Because your big and strong and

The kitchen door starts to open.

WOMEN O/S

Sabine sacrificed his whole family.

KORAL

And we’re a daddy short.

Godfrey strains to see who just spoke- Koral’s twin sister comes into view.

They are identical except Koral’s twin has ginger hair.

GINGER TWIN (to Koral about her hair)

Dark suits you...I might get

mine done.

Godfrey tries to get out the chair, but ginger twin pushes him back.

GINGER TWIN

Relax.

GODFREY

Emily, Ruth?

KORAL

They lie with Sabine’s stone.

GODFREY

You fucking crazy bitch- I going

take great pleasure in-

KORAL

Save your breath- you’re going to need it.

GINGER TWIN

People do the strangest things on the

anniversary of their missing loved ones.

KORAL

Suicide.

They both GIGGLE.

EXT. THE LAKE- NIGHT.

Godfrey body floats on the surface.

EXT. CLEARING IN THE WOODS- NIGHT.

Koral and ginger twin are wet and naked as they touch Sabine’s stone.

FADE OUT:

End.

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RIPPLES