SEARCH PARTY

Written by

Kurt Conety

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

Dried leaves and twigs CRUNCH under the boots of HUNTER, 40s, who roams the woods armed with a rifle and a duffle bag. Purplish flesh pokes out from the brush a few yards ahead of him. As he approaches he realizes it's a severed human leq.

The Hunter studies the leg, then gazes across the forest, spotting nothing but bare trees. He slips the leg into his duffle bag and marches on.

EXT. FOREST - LATER

With his belly perched against a fallen tree trunk, the Hunter raises his rifle and pushes his right eye in front of the scope.

HUNTER'S P.O.V. - RIFLE SCOPE

A deer grazes on an isolated patch of grass. Next to the grass two small unidentifiable white masses stand out.

EXT. FOREST - SAME

With a quizzical expression, the Hunter raises his head away from the scope. As he pulls back, the butt of his gun drags along the tree bark alerting the deer to his presence. After a brief moment of hesitation, the deer scampers deep into the forest.

EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

The Hunter closes in on the objects to find that they are a human ear and nose, cleanly removed. Once again, he tosses them in the duffle bag.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

The sun slides behind a neighboring mountain leaving a soft orange glow across the forest floor. The Hunter throws on gloves and a fur hat. Swirling winds shuffle the leaves and uncover a torso with arms, legs and head conspicuously absent.

HUNTER (to himself)

Jesus...

The torso is draped in a fleece vest, but lacks any identification.

INT. CABIN - EVENING

Steam rises from a pot stirred by WIFE, 40s, whose homely appearance is a testament to her solitude. The cabin is a tight squeeze, but is warmly lit and creates a cozy feel.

The front door swings open as the Hunter storms in from the cold, letting his duffle bag FLOP on the ground.

WIFE

Find anything good out there?

HUNTER

Could have gone better I suppose.

WIFE

Oh?

The Hunter disrobes and changes into comfier threads. The wife ladles soup into bowls and rests them on the table.

WIFE (CONT'D)

You come away with anything?

HUNTER

(beat)

A nose, an ear, a left leg, and a torso.

There is a long pause as the two lock eyes. After a moment the Wife HOWLS in laughter.

WIFE

That's it?! You've had all day and you didn't even get to the arms? Or the head? The head was obvious!

The Wife rushes to their desk and grabs a piece of paper with all the major body parts listed on them. She scribbles check marks by the parts he's recovered.

HUNTER

Well, you didn't make it easy. You could have left *something* on the torso.

WIFE

And what's the fun in that?

EXT. - FOREST - NIGHT

A pale figure ambles through the pitch black night. The LOST MAN holds his trembling hands to his mouth and blows hot air into them. He looks like a rat in a maze, head nervously twisting from side to side. In the distance he spots the faint gleam of the cabin.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

HUNTER

How far out did you go anyways? I thought we agreed to a two mile radius.

WIFE

Are you accusing me of cheating?!

HUNTER

I'm just asking--

LOST MAN (O.S.)

(faintly)

--Hello?

The Wife and Hunter freeze, eyes popping at the sound of his voice.

HUNTER

You hear that?

EXT. CABIN

LOST MAN

Is anybody there?!

The Lost Man peers in at the window, but is thwarted by the curtains.

INT. CABIN

The two sit in silence, each one waiting for the other to speak.

WIFE

(whispering)

Say something.

HUNTER

(to Lost Man)

What do you want?

LOST MAN (O.S.)

I've lost my way. I need to use a phone and get in touch with my friend... I haven't seen him in a couple days now.

HUNTER

(to Lost Man)

One minute!

The Hunter springs from the table and throws on his coat.

EXT. CABIN

The Lost Man patiently waits out front, shivering as the mountain air stings his flesh. He spots a tiny glimmer next to the tree at the side of the house.

INT. CABIN

The Hunter scampers to the couch and shoves his arm into the crevice between the couch and the wall. He retrieves a machete and holds it with purpose.

EXT. CABIN

With baby steps, the Lost Man inches closer to the object, seeing the shine of the moon reflected on it. As he fights the shadows he notices the contours of a face, and when he kneels down, it's clear that it's a human head, light bouncing off the open eyes.

HUNTER

(to Wife)

Now we'll see just how good you are.

A horrific SCREAM radiates from outside and causes both of them to jump.

WIFE

Looks like he's got a knack for this.

The Hunter smirks and opens the door, escaping into darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END