

THE GAMEKEEPER

Written by

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FADE IN.

EXT. WOODLAND - DAY

A cold autumn morning. The vibrantly coloured leaves carpet the ground.

Gamekeeper MUNROE (50s) is a burly man with thick beard and withered features. He wears a Westfield wax jacket, flat cap and carries a rifle as he traipses through the wood.

His dog LENNOX bounds around before rushing off into the distance. The distant barking alerts Munroe and so he heads toward his canine's location.

MUNROE

What have you found, boy?

Munroe finds Lennox sniffing around the corpse of a fox. Munroe crouches down to examine it further. He discovers small bite marks in the flesh. He frowns with confusion.

His eye is caught by a mound of leaves just ahead of him. A small patch of red polka dot material peaks through them.

Munroe scans the mound and catches what looks like a hand hidden amongst it.

MUNROE (CONT'D)

What the hell?

Munroe stands and cautiously approaches. He brushes away the leaves to find a young WOMAN (20s) lying unconscious beneath them. She wears a red polka dot dress. He places a finger on her neck to check she's alive and notices her eyes twitch.

Munroe takes off his jacket and, after brushing away the remaining leaves, drapes it over her skinny frail body.

He throws the rifle over his shoulder and carefully picks her up.

INT. MUNROE'S SHACK - DAY

The shack is well decorated with all the mod cons. It is one room with the bedroom, kitchenette/dining room and living room separated by the furniture.

Hanging on the walls are photos of Munroe with his army platoon. On a table a model aeroplane kit half-built.

Munroe enters the shack carrying the woman. Lennox enters and immediately heads straight for his basket.

Munroe lowers the woman down onto the bed, brushing the hair away from her face. There is dried blood around her mouth.

He looks up and down her body finding black spots along her skin like cigarette burns.

Munroe enters the kitchenette and runs a flannel under a tap. He returns to the woman, pulls up a chair and sits beside the bed. He begins wiping her face.

She slowly opens her eyes and looks up at Munroe. Her eyes widen. She panics and pushes away from him cramming herself into the corner where the bed meets the wall.

She looks around the room startled.

She speaks with a thick Eastern European accent.

SABINA

Where am I? Who are you?

Munroe raises his hands in defence.

MUNROE

It's okay. I'm not going to hurt you. My name is Munroe.

She pulls the duvet cover over her for protection as her eyes continue to dart around the room.

MUNROE (CONT'D)

What's your name?

SABINA

Sabina.

MUNROE

Where are you from, Sabina?

SABINA

Romania.

MUNROE

You're a long way from home. How did you end up here?

SABINA

I was taken by men from my home. They put me in a container with many other girls. They expect us to work for them, but I escaped.

MUNROE
Did they hurt you?

Munroe gestures toward the burns on her arm. She looks at them and then at him. She nods.

MUNROE (CONT'D)
Don't worry. You'll be safe here.

SABINA
Will you call police?

MUNROE
No, I'm afraid there's no phone in here. However, once you get your strength back I'll take you to the manor house and you can call them there.

Munroe forces a smile. Sabina smiles back.

CUT TO:

INT. MUNROE'S SHACK - LATER

Munroe is in the kitchen stirring a pan of soup on a hot plate. Sabina sits in a comfy armchair by a wood burning stove, the duvet wrapped around her. Lennox is sat with his head resting on her lap. She strokes him softly.

The sound of voices alerts them both. They look at each other and then toward the window. The voices seem to be nearing. Sabina pulls the duvet tightly around her.

Munroe grabs his rifle and approaches the window. He peers outside to see three MEN (30s) walking toward the shack.

MUNROE
Stay quiet. It'll be okay.

Munroe opens the door and steps outside. Lennox runs out with him. Munroe closes the door behind him.

EXT. MUNROE'S SHACK - DAY

Munroe stands on the porch, Lennox by his side. The three men have greasy hair with five o'clock shadows. The one leading the group wears a leather jacket, the two behind him wear a denim jacket and tracksuit, respectively. They spot Munroe and approach him.

MUNROE

This is private property. You can't be here.

Leather Jacket steps forward. He smiles apologetically.

LEATHER JACKET

I'm sorry. We are lost. I think we took wrong turning.

MUNROE

That you did. So, I suggest you turn around and head back the way you came.

LEATHER JACKET

Thank you. We will do that.

They turn around, but Leather Jacket stops and turns back.

LEATHER JACKET (CONT'D)

Excuse me, but have you seen a young girl come through here. She is our friend and we are looking for her.

MUNROE

Nobody has come through here. Like I said, it's private property.

He stares at Munroe. An awkward silence between them. A sound comes from within the shack. Leather Jacket smiles at Munroe with a devilish grin.

LEATHER JACKET

Give us the girl.

MUNROE

There's no girl here.

LEATHER JACKET

Please, do not play with me. If you hand her over, we will leave and you will never see us again. I promise.

MUNROE

I can't give you what I don't have.

LEATHER JACKET

Very well.

Leather Jacket draws a pistol from the back of his jeans and raises it to aim at Munroe. Before he can get a shot off, Munroe raises the rifle and fires a shot.

He disarms the man severing off his ring finger. He falls to his knees in pain holding his injured hand as the blood drips onto the leaves. Lennox starts growling.

Denim Jacket reaches for his gun tucked into his waistband, but Munroe fires a shot at the ground by his feet before cocking the rifle again and aiming it directly at him.

MUNROE

Don't you dare. Throw it away.

Denim Jacket throws his gun away. Munroe turns his focus to the track-suited man.

MUNROE (CONT'D)

You as well.

Tracksuit raises his hands nervously.

TRACKSUIT

I have no gun.

Munroe scowls at him.

MUNROE

Show me.

Tracksuit lifts up his jacket and spins to show nothing tucked into his waistband.

LEATHER JACKET

You stupid asshole. You don't understand.

Munroe aims his rifle at Leather Jacket.

MUNROE

No, you don't understand. If you don't leave this land immediately, you'll be carried out, in a bag.

Tracksuit and Denim Jacket approach Leather Jacket and help him to his feet.

LEATHER JACKET

We'll be back.

They turn and walk away. Munroe waits for them to disappear behind some bushes before lowering his rifle and heading back inside the shack. Lennox follows him.

INT. MUNROE'S SHACK - DAY

Munroe enters to find the shack empty. He looks around confused.

MUNROE

Sabina?

Munroe looks around the end of the bed to find Sabina on the floor hiding. She is still wrapped in the duvet.

SABINA

Are they gone?

MUNROE

For now.

Munroe crouches down to be on her level.

MUNROE (CONT'D)

We need to leave. It's not safe here anymore.

She looks up at him with sad eyes.

SABINA

They will come back?

Munroe nods.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - DAY

Munroe's Land Rover pulls up outside the large ornate house. Munroe jumps out and rushes over to the front door, he rings the bell before running back to the car.

He opens the passenger side and helps Sabina out. The gravel driveway prodding her bare feet. She wears Munroe's jacket.

Lennox is in the back barking.

MUNROE

Stay boy, I'll be back soon.

The door is opened by the butler, WILSON (60s). He looks confused as Munroe pushes past with Sabina.

WILSON

Uh, excuse me?

INT. MANOR HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sabina sits in a wing-back chair by the roaring fireplace. Munroe stands by her waiting, he has his coat back. Wilson stands by the doorway staring daggers at him.

MR MCKENDRICK (50s) enters the room wearing a dressing gown over his luxurious pyjamas. He is a small man with thinning hair. He blows his nose into a handkerchief before putting on a pair of glasses. He looks at Munroe confused.

MCKENDRICK
Munroe? What is it?

MUNROE
Mr McKendrick, I'm sorry to bother you, but I need you to take care of this young woman.

McKendrick takes a long hard look at the woman.

MCKENDRICK
Who is she?

MUNROE
Her name is Sabina. I found her in the woods. Some men are after her. She needs somewhere safe to stay, for now at least.

MCKENDRICK
I don't know, Munroe.

MUNROE
Please, Sir. I wouldn't ask if it wasn't absolutely necessary. She needs our help.

MCKENDRICK
And where will you be?

MUNROE
Protecting my home.

MCKENDRICK
Munroe, what trouble have you brought onto my estate?

MUNROE
I'm sorry, sir. I have to go.

Munroe rushes for the door.

MCKENDRICK

But, Munroe.

The door opens, then slams shut. McKendrick stares at Sabina.

MCKENDRICK (CONT'D)

Wilson, keep an eye on her. Make sure she behaves herself.

WILSON

Very well, Sir.

McKendrick sneezes into his handkerchief and then leaves the room. Sabina looks over at Wilson who gives her a stern look. She looks back at the warming fire.

INT. MUNROE'S SHACK - DAY

Munroe bursts into the shack followed by Lennox. He searches drawers, cupboards, under the bed.

He lays out on the floor everything he finds. Snare wire, a couple of old bear traps and plenty of rounds of ammunition for his rifle.

EXT. MUNROE'S SHACK - DAY

The sun is slowing setting. Munroe rushes to place the traps around his shack.

-He opens up the bear traps and hides them under leaves.

-He wraps snare wire around tree trunks to create trip wire.

-He sharpens wooden stakes with a knife.

-He stabs the stakes into the ground, the sharp point toward the sky.

-Munroe opens the shack door and gestures for Lennox to enter. He does as his master asks. Munroe closes the door behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUNROE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Munroe lays on the roof of the shack in a prone position. His rifle lined up in front of him.

He uses the scope to scan the tree line. No sign of anyone yet.

The SNAP of a branch. Munroe swings the rifle across the horizon to find the source of the sound.

The faint hint of leaves rustling toward him. Then the SNAP of a bear trap and the blood curdling scream.

Denim Jacket lay on the ground in agony. He tries to pull the bear trap from his broken ankle, but it's locked tight.

A MAN in a hoody runs over to the aid of Denim Jacket, but he trips over the snare wire and lands onto the spikes. They penetrate his chest.

Munroe is still trying to find signs of movement, but only noises that overlay each other.

Leather Jacket, Tracksuit and a third man in a long winter coat approach the shack from the opposite side. They each have AK47s.

They cock the assault rifles and send a line of fire across the shack's walls, cutting through the wood.

Lennox starts barking from inside.

Munroe turns to face the other way and spots the muzzle flashes in the distance.

He uses the scope to see the lit up faces of the three men.

Munroe lines up a shot on Long Winter Coat and fires, the bullet hits him square in the face. Another man down.

The shack door lock is splintered and the door swings open. Lennox escapes the shack and runs toward the remaining two men. He pounces onto Tracksuit biting his arm. He screams and then pulls a pistol from his waistband, firing a shot at the dog. Lennox yelps.

Tracksuit gets to his feet holding his bleeding arm to his chest. He is about to fire another shot at Lennox, but he's pushed off his feet as his chest explodes from Munroe's next shot.

Munroe cocks the rifle again and looks for Leather Jacket. Leather Jacket reloads and fires at the shack aiming toward the roof.

Munroe avoids splintered wood. He fires another shot at Leather Jacket and hits him in the chest. He falls to the ground.

Munroe waits a moment for any signs of life, but there are none. He crawls to the edge of the roof and slides off onto the soft ground.

He cautiously makes his way over to Leather Jacket who is lying on the ground panting for breath. Munroe aims his rifle at him.

LEATHER JACKET

You fool. You do not understand.
She must die. She's dangerous.
She's not human. She will kill you
all.

Munroe frowns.

MUNROE

What do you mean?

Leather Jacket breaths his last breathe and closes his eyes. Munroe throws the rifle over his shoulder and picks up a wounded Lennox. He rushes over to his Land Rover.

INT. MUNROE'S LAND ROVER - NIGHT

Lennox lay panting in the back of the Land Rover wrapped in a blanket. Munroe is driving erratically toward the Manor house.

INT. MANOR HOUSE, LOBBY - NIGHT

The doorbell is ringing, but all is quiet around the house. The front door bursts open and Munroe enters with rifle in hand.

MUNROE

Hello?

Munroe peers into the empty living room where the fire is still roaring.

MUNROE (CONT'D)

Wilson? Mr McKendrick?

Munroe looks up the staircase into the darkness. He cautiously climbs them.

INT. MANOR HOUSE, UPSTAIRS LANDING - NIGHT

Munroe treads slowly along the landing. Up ahead he sees the door of a bedroom slightly ajar.

MUNROE
Hello? Is anybody here? Mr
McKendrick.

INT. MANOR HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Munroe pushes open the door and steps inside. The light from the landing rushes into the room and reveals a horrifying sight.

Munroe looks over the torn and shredded corpse of Mr McKendrick on the blood soaked bed. McKendrick's severed head frozen with a face of pure shock.

Munroe spots the red polka dot dress crumpled on the floor beside him.

He hears the sound of breathing behind him. He slowly turns and looks into the dark corner of the room. A pair of red eyes stare back at him.

Sabina starts to growl. Munroe carefully cocks his rifle. The clicking noise startles her and she lunges out of the corner launching herself toward him. Munroe raises the rifle and fires a shot.

CUT TO BLACK.