

BEAR

PILOT

WRITTEN BY
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EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

BILLY STEMPLE, a thirty-year-old, ruggedly handsome, carpenter, is working on a crew framing a house.

Driving up in a fifteen-year-old wreck of a Honda is Billy's beautiful wife, MARY ANN. She is also his age with a striking figure and long blonde hair. In a car seat in the back seat of the Honda is their adorable, four-year-old daughter, SAMANTHA.

Billy is on the roof. A big smile takes over his face as he sees them approach.

Billy descends the roof to greet the vehicle.

He kisses his wife through the open car window and strokes his Child's face. The baby giggles.

MARY ANN

Hi, babe.

BILLY

What brings you here?

MARY ANN

Can't a wife miss her husband?

He kisses her again.

Samantha unbuckles her car seat and moves to the back of the front seat to get a kiss from her dad.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

We got this paperwork in the mail today. From an attorney from Tennessee.

She produces a letter from her purse and hands it to him. He reads to himself.

BILLY

What the?

MARY ANN

It looks good for us, doesn't it?

BILLY

Yeah, if we want to move to Tennessee.

MARY ANN

It looks like there's a house. Who's this Charlie?

BILLY

My uncle Charlie. My dad's brother.

MARY ANN

I never heard you or your dad speak of him.

BILLY

He and my dad seldom spoke. Dad said he had a phone on his wall in the kitchen but was rarely in the house. He had an acreage to take care of. My dad called but seldom got him on the phone, he was a recluse.

MARY ANN

Look at the last part of the letter.

BILLY

(out loud)

"Contact attorney Wallace Snell at"

MARY ANN

No before that.

BILLY

(out loud)

Oh, "this land may not be sold. If it is not wanted by you it will be turned into a nature reserve. To take possession of this property you must agree to take care of apple..." Apple?

MARY ANN

Yeah, I didn't get that. Does he mean trees?

BILLY

I don't know?

MARY ANN

How much land is there? How big is the house?

BILLY

I have no idea.

MARY ANN

Call the attorney.

He produces his phone and dials it.

BILLY

Hi, I'm Billy Stemple, I was sent a letter and instructed to call attorney Wallace Snell. Okay...

Pause.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Yes, I'm Billy Stemple, I believe my uncle Charlie Stemple put you in charge of his estate.

Pause.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Okay, how much land? Eighty acres, okay... and a house, okay. What does the land look like?... You haven't seen it, okay. Do you know what is meant by taking care of apple... Not a clue... I know, he was a strange bird. We'll arrange a trip to Tennessee and contact you. Okay, thanks.

MARY ANN

Well?

BILLY

It's real. There's land and a house and outbuildings. He didn't know much else.

MARY ANN

He didn't know what apple is?

BILLY

No, no idea. He didn't know my uncle. He just walked into his office one day and told him what he wanted.

MARY ANN

Huh. Have we gotten lucky?

BILLY

Maybe. Anyway, were off to Nashville. It's fifteen miles outside the city. He said it's a beautiful country.

EXT. STEMPLE HOUSE - DAY

Mary Ann with Samantha in her arms is entering a cab as Billy wrestles luggage into the trunk.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

The trio is waiting in line.

The trio is now boarding a plane.

INT. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Mary Ann, Samantha, and Billy are sitting at the desk of Wallace Snell.

Wallace engages the intercom.

WALLACE

Sally, bring in the Stemple paperwork.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

This will only take a minute. Papers to sign. Is this your first visit to Nashville?

SAMANTHA

(blurts in)

I flew on an airplane!

Wallace smiles.

WALLACE

Was it fun, honey?

SAMANTHA

I was scared.

WALLACE

Well, it's safe, I've flown many times.

Sally enters and puts the papers on his desk.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Okay, we have the title to the property, you'll have to go to the courthouse and get it recorded.

BILLY

Okay.

WALLACE

There is eighteen thousand in a banking account. You will have to go to the bank with this paperwork.

BILLY

Okay.

WALLACE

And I have written down directions to the farm. It's East of the city down interstate forty about fifteen miles.

BILLY

Okay.

WALLACE

Follow the directions, it's easy to find.

BILLY

And you've never seen it?

WALLACE

No, never. Met your uncle when he walked in the door. A scruffy man.

BILLY

That sounds like him.

MARY ANN

Are there schools out there?

WALLACE

I doubt it. I'm sure there are school buses that will take the little one to one of the smaller, nearby towns.

MARY ANN

That sounds better than an intercity school.

WALLACE

I'm sure it would be. How old is she?

MARY ANN

She just turned four.

WALLACE

You have some time to find a school. Sounds like you've decided to stay?

BILLY

Omaha is a nice place but it is a city and we don't own our house.

MARY ANN

There's nothing keeping us there.

WALLACE

This is the south, you'll find the people real friendly. Good luck.

MARY ANN

Thank you.

BILLY

Thanks.

Wallace stands and offers his hand.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

MARY ANN

The lawyer was nice.

BILLY

Yeah, and helpful. You read the map, I'll drive.

MARY ANN

Maybe it's a good sign. Maybe all the locals are friendly.

SAMANTHA

(loud)

Ice cream! You said if I was quiet I would get ice cream! And I only talked once.

MARY ANN

Okay, honey, we'll look for ice cream on the way.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR/STEMPLE FARM - DAY

Mary Ann is reading the directions as they pull onto a lane in front of a rickety gate.

The long dirt lane leads up a slight incline about fifty yards to a DILAPIDATED UNPAINTED HOUSE that can be seen from the road. The BARN and OUTBUILDINGS match the house, unkempt.

MARY ANN
Please tell me this isn't it.

BILLY
If you read the directions right...
It says Stemple on the mailbox.

MARY ANN
Oh, God.

BILLY
If we could only sell it but we
can't. We take it or it goes to the
state of Tennessee.

MARY ANN
Did we get a gate opener?

Billy grins at Mary Ann.

BILLY
Yeah, we brought our own.

With that Billy exits the vehicle and muscles the gate open.

MARY ANN
You must be kidding, I'll never get
out by myself.

BILLY
Something to fix.

They drive up the lane looking around.

MARY ANN
I don't see any apple trees.

BILLY
There's a lot of pasture.

They arrive at the house and stare quietly. It's even worse than they thought.

MARY ANN
When does our plane leave?

BILLY
Three days.

MARY ANN

We can find a room in Nashville.

BILLY

Or stay here. We should give it a shot.

MARY ANN

Really?

BILLY

I'm a carpenter. I see it all fixed up.

MARY ANN

It needs more than paint.

BILLY

No. I see it needs a roof, a porch, new windows and I'm sure electrical, plumbing, and probably, a new furnace.

MARY ANN

So, a new house.

BILLY

Pretty much. Nothing I can't do. And remember, we have the money from the bank. That will buy a lot of materials.

MARY ANN

I guess.

BILLY

Eighteen thousand won't buy us much of a house in Omaha. Let's get out and look around.

They exit the vehicle and carefully watch where they walk as they ascend the rickety porch and enter the kitchen.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Mary Ann takes Samantha's hand.

MARY ANN

Take my hand, honey, and watch where you walk.

They look around in silence before they start a walk-through.

Billy enters the bathroom.

BILLY

Best not to go in there. That will be the first thing I work on.

MARY ANN

It sounds like you've decided.

BILLY

I see what it could be. And look at all the land.

MARY ANN

I believe in you. I know you can fix this place up. But I don't think we can stay here until it's more liveable. We definitely need new beds.

BILLY

And a new bathroom. Two weeks and I can transform this into something liveable.

MARY ANN

Looks like we're moving.

BILLY

I'll drive out with my tools and when I'm ready, you and the baby can drive out.

MARY ANN

We're not staying here tonight?

BILLY

No, we'll go back to Nashville.

Start montage:

Billy along with two workers is demolishing the inside of the house.

A dumpster sits out front and the two men are throwing the beds into it along with the furniture, refrigerator, kitchen and bath cabinets, toilet, and stove.

It's a moonless night and Billy is sitting on a wooden chair in the barren living room. Suddenly a crack of thunder and the rain starts to pour. Slowly rain starts to drip inside the house in several places. Billy moves his chair several times to get out of the drips.

On a bright sunny morning, Billy pulls his pickup loaded with lumber in front of the house. The two workers are on the roof pulling off the shingles and shoveling them into the dumpster.

Billy is rewiring the house.

Billy is reworking the plumbing.

Billy with the help of the two workers is putting on a new roof.

It's a cloudy night and it is pouring rain outside. Billy is walking through the house staring up at the ceiling. There are no drips. He has a smile on his face.

Billy is standing in the doorway of the bathroom admiring the shiny new room.

Billy along with the workers is hanging drywall.

A painting crew of several men is painting the inside and outside of the house.

A new furnace and water heater are installed by a crew.

End montage:

INT./EXT. BARN - DAY

Billy is in the barn looking around. He hears a truck pull into the yard and goes outside.

Arriving in a new Ford pickup is neighbor JEB, a rugged, elderly man. In the cab with the man is a mangy mutt. He has two cows and an old donkey in the bed.

Jeb jumps out of the truck along with the dog and greets Billy, shaking his hand.

JEB

Howdy, I'm Jeb, your neighbor. You must be the nephew?

BILLY

Yes, I am. I'm Billy Stemple.

JEB

Good to meet you. So glad you decided to fix this place up. It sure has gone to hell.

BILLY
Yeah, it was a mess.

JEB
It needed someone like you. Looks like you did a good job.

BILLY
Thanks.

JEB
Well, here they are.

BILLY
Who?

JEB
Your animals.

BILLY
What?

JEB
These two cows and that old ass, they're yours.

BILLY
Why?

JEB
They come with the place. They were Charlie's. When he got sick I took care of them for him.

BILLY
Oh, wow. I didn't know. What do I do with them?

JEB
Not much. Charlie had them forever. They were more pets than anything. They gave him something to do.

BILLY
Oh.

JEB
Let them out in the pasture in the morning and put them in the barn at night.

BILLY
Okay, I can do that, I guess.

JEB

Even if it rains. They like that,
it cleans them off.

BILLY

Okay. Would you like to see the
place?

JEB

No time. Gotta get to the seed
store before the choice seeds are
gone. Getting close to planting
time. Let me get these critters
unloaded.

BILLY

Okay, another time.

Jeb unloads the animals.

JEB

Let me know if you need anything.
I'm the first farm to the east.

BILLY

Okay, will do.

JEB

(entering his truck)
Oh, and look out for apple, he
doesn't know you yet.

BILLY

Huh?

Jed starts to drives off leaving Billy to stare at the
animals. They stare back.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, you forgot your dog!

JEB

He's yours too. His name is Randy!

Billy watches him drive off.

BILLY

Randy? Randy's a mess. The wife
wouldn't let you in the house like
that.

Without prompting, the animals head towards the pasture in
front of the property.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
That was easy.

Billy takes a long look at Randy.

BILLY (CONT'D)
You're sleeping outside tonight,
dog. Tomorrow it's bath day. And
those fleas have to go.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The sun has gone down. Billy hears the cows bellow. He looks out a kitchen window towards the barn. The two cows and the donkey are standing facing the barn door.

BILLY
(to himself)
Well, I'll be damn. Smart animals.

Billy slips his jacket on and exits the house.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Billy is scrubbing a sad-looking Randy in a soapy tub. Randy is whining.

BILLY
Is this your first bath, boy? Look
at all those fleas. I got something
to take care of that.

The bath is finished and Billy takes a shear to Randy. More whining. A much different Randy emerges. He then treats him for the fleas and puts a flea collar on him.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Much better. Samantha is going to
be so happy. They'll be here in a
couple days. I think I'll surprise
her with you.

EXT. ACREAGE - DAY

Billy with Randy running ahead of him is surveying the property.

They come upon a small creek where Randy splashes through the water as Billy explores the banks and spies animal tracks.

He comes across some plastic tubing leading away from the creek. He follows.

He comes upon the remains of an orchard. The small trees have been broken and lay in ruins.

BILLY

What happened here, boy? Old Charlie planted an orchard and was watering it from the creek.

He scans the broken trees and spies animal tracks. He carefully examines them.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

I don't know my wild animals, but these look like bear and these look like deer tracks. That's it, deer destroyed the apple trees. Makes sense. Charlie must have wanted me to take care of his apple trees, I guess.

INT./EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Billy is hustling about cleaning and straightening up the house. Randy is running about following him sensing the excitement.

BILLY

(to Randy)

Today's the day, boy.

Suddenly Billy freezes.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(Excited)

Listen! They're here!

He rushes out of the house followed by Randy. A big smile on his face as he watches his wife's vehicle crawl up the lane.

The vehicle comes to a stop in front of the house. Mary Ann's eyes are wide open as she scans the newly remodeled house.

Samantha is the first to hop out of the car, running into her daddy's arms. Randy is jumping after Samantha.

SAMANTHA

Daddy, daddy, daddy, I missed you!
...Who's that?

BILLY
Oh, my baby, I missed you too.
That's your dog, Randy.

SAMANTHA
(screams)
I have a dog!

She scrambles out of her daddy's arms and hugs Randy.

Mary Ann exits the car staring at the house. Billy picks up Samantha and the three hug.

MARY ANN
The house, it's beautiful.

BILLY
Wait till you see the inside.

SAMANTHA
Daddy, what are those?

She points to the cows and donkey out in the field.

BILLY
Those are our cows and donkey.

MARY ANN
We have animals?

BILLY
They came with the place. I was as surprised as you are.

MARY ANN
What do we do with them?

BILLY
Not much. I think they're pets.

MARY ANN
Did our things arrive?

BILLY
Two days ago. Everything was intact.

MARY ANN
Good.

BILLY
Are you ready to see the inside?

MARY ANN

Yeah.

BILLY

(to Samantha)

Come on, hun. Let's go see your new room, it's pink.

SAMANTHA

Yea!

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Samantha, followed by Randy, is running through the house before landing in her room and bouncing on her bed.

Mary Ann and Billy are slowly walking through the house. Mary Ann is examining everything. In the kitchen, she stops and spins around.

MARY ANN

It's beautiful.

BILLY

We need to go shopping and get furniture. I got us beds and bedding.

She hugs and kisses him. Samantha and Randy keep running in and out of the house.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Are you ready to start a new life?

MARY ANN

I am.

INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family is finishing up the evening meal. Billy glances out the window towards the barn.

BILLY

Oh, looks like it's time to put the animals to bed.

SAMANTHA

Let me see!

Billy lifts her up to show her the animals in front of the barn door.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
What are they doing?

BILLY
They want to go to bed. They're
tired. Come on put your coat on.
We'll put them to bed.

She complies and they head out the door.

EXT. FARMYARD - NIGHT

Billy and Samantha are at the barn herding the animals
inside. It's dark, windy and it's spitting rain.

BILLY
Okay, number one thing you have to
be aware of is to not stand behind
the animals.

SAMANTHA
Why?

BILLY
Well, they're big and they could
kick. It might hurt you.

SAMANTHA
Okay, daddy.

In a grove of trees about twenty yards from the barn, sitting
unnoticed and watching intently, patiently, is a two hundred
pound black bear.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

BILLY
Now, you put the cows in this pen,
they know where to go and the
donkey into the other.

SAMANTHA
What's his name?

BILLY
The donkey?

SAMANTHA
Yeah.

BILLY

I don't know. I don't think he has a name.

SAMANTHA

Oh.

BILLY

Now we have to make sure they have plenty of water.

Billy pulls the lever that fills the trough.

BILLY (CONT'D)

We have to make sure they have plenty of water here and in the pasture.

SAMANTHA

What's a pasture?

BILLY

That's where they go when they leave the barn.

SAMANTHA

Oh.

BILLY

That's where they go to eat.

SAMANTHA

What do they eat?

BILLY

Grass.

SAMANTHA

Whew!

BILLY

Aren't you glad you're not a cow?

SAMANTHA

Yeah, I like to eat french fries and hamburgers and ice cream.

BILLY

We'll have a discussion about hamburgers at another time. We're done. They can go to sleep now. Let's go back in the house.

They head back to the house after Billy closes the barn door.

Still sitting as he was, the bear watches their every move.

INT. HOUSE - SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mary Ann is putting Samantha to bed.

MARY ANN
Do you like it here?

SAMANTHA
Yeah, it's fun. And I have a dog!

MARY ANN
It's okay you run around with Randy
but stay out of the woods.

SAMANTHA
Okay, mom. Why?

MARY ANN
It would be easy for you to get
lost. And there are wild animals in
the woods.

SAMANTHA
What kind of animals?

MARY ANN
A, well, deer and wolfs and maybe
bears.

SAMANTHA
Oh. Randy takes care of me.

MARY ANN
It seems he does. Now go to sleep
and you can go exploring with your
dad tomorrow.

SAMANTHA
And Randy too. Can he stay in bed
with me?

MARY ANN
Sure.

Mary Ann turns off the light and exits the room.

Samantha is watching the full moon through the window as it
pops in and out of the clouds.

Slowly a big hairy head pops up in the window. Randy takes
notice.

Samantha props herself up on one elbow.

She slowly crawls out of bed and cautiously moves over to the window and stares.

When the moon appears from behind the clouds we see it's the same bear that was watching them at the barn.

The bear and Samantha stare at each other. Randy shows no interest and goes back to sleep on the bed.

After several minutes the bear runs off into the woods and Samantha returns to her bed.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The family is eating breakfast.

MARY ANN

So, should we go exploring?

BILLY

Sure. I haven't seen all of our land yet. Maybe we can figure out some way of making money off the land.

MARY ANN

You mean plant some crop?

BILLY

Sure, it's good soil.

SAMANTHA

I saw a bear.

Mary Ann and Billy exchange a look and a grin.

MARY ANN

You did. Are you sure it was a bear?

Samantha jumps out of her chair and runs into her room. She returns immediately with a small stuffed bear. She hands it to Mary Ann.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

Is this the bear you saw?

SAMANTHA

No, silly, that's what he looked like!

BILLY

Where did you see him?

SAMANTHA

At my window.

MARY ANN

What was he doing?

Samantha shrugs her shoulders.

SAMANTHA

Looking at me.

BILLY

Just looking at you?

She shakes her head.

MARY ANN

(to Billy)

Is it possible?

BILLY

Sure. We're in bear country. But I doubt it. It was probably a dream. Randy would of went nuts... Are we ready to go exploring?

SAMANTHA

(excited)

Yeah, let's go!

The trio gets dressed in their hiking gear.

Billy comes out of the bedroom carrying an older lever-action Winchester. Mary Ann looks surprised.

MARY ANN

What's that?

BILLY

I found it under my uncle's bed. It must be necessary.

MARY ANN

Okay, but be careful.

BILLY

I won't load it unless I need it.

MARY ANN

Let me get her boots on her and we'll be off.

BILLY

Okay, I'm going to check on something.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Billy exits the house, gun in hand, and walks over to Samantha's bedroom window. Looking around he sees the grass by the window is tamped down. He walks a short distance scanning the ground. In the soft ground near the trees, he sees some faint tracks. He kneels down to exam them. He loads the gun.

Start montage:

The happy family with Randy running about is hiking through the woods. Billy is pointing to the trees.

Billy and Mary Ann are sitting in a meadow chatting as Randy and Samantha are running about chasing butterflies.

They come upon a small cave. Standing at the opening, Billy sticks his head in as Mary Ann grabs his coat to stop him from going in.

They come upon the creek where Billy points out the animal tracks he found earlier. Billy pushes a log across the stream so they can walk across. When they reach the other side he pushes the log aside. Billy points out the plastic tubing.

Following the tubing, they come upon the apple trees.

End montage:

BILLY

And this is what I think he meant about taking care of Apple, his trees.

MARY ANN

What happened to the trees?

BILLY

It looks to me like wild animals got to them.

MARY ANN

Well, what can we do?

BILLY

Not much. He planted here because it was downhill from the creak.

MARY ANN
How about a fence?

BILLY
It won't keep the bears out.

MARY ANN
Bears!

BILLY
Yeah, they're here, somewhere.

SAMANTHA
I have a bear friend.

MARY ANN
Yes, honey, you showed us.

SAMANTHA
(stubborn)
No, a real bear!

BILLY
She may be right.

MARY ANN
(concern)
What?

BILLY
The grass was pushed down outside
her window. Like something with a
big butt was sitting there.

MARY ANN
Oh, my God!

BILLY
Samantha, what did the bear do?

She shrugs her shoulder.

SAMANTHA
Nothing. He just looked at me. And
he waved.

MARY ANN
He waved?

SAMANTHA
Sometime.

BILLY
He doesn't growl at you?

SAMANTHA
No, silly, he's my friend.

MARY ANN
Why do you think he's your friend.

Samantha again shrugs her shoulder.

SAMANTHA
He's real nice.

BILLY
He came to your window at night?

Samantha vigorously shakes her head.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(to Mary Ann)
Randy never barked. That's odd.
Some watchdog.

MARY ANN
Well, I don't want to know him. You
keep that gun loaded.

SAMANTHA
What do bears eat?

MARY ANN
You're not planning on feeding him,
are you?

BILLY
Don't go near the bear, dear.

SAMANTHA
But he's my friend!

MARY ANN
He's a wild bear. He's nobody's
friend.

SAMANTHA
He's hungry.

BILLY
He finds his food in the woods.

SAMANTHA
But what?

BILLY
Berries and acorns and stuff from
trees. They like fruit.

SAMANTHA

Oh.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mary Ann and Billy are watching TV. Samantha is lying on the floor coloring.

MARY ANN

Bedtime, honey.

SAMANTHA

Okay.

MARY ANN

Go get in bed, I'll tuck you in.

Samantha rushes off to her room.

Samantha is in her bed and Randy is at the foot of the bed as Mary Ann comes in and starts to close the curtain.

SAMANTHA

(quick)

No!

MARY ANN

Honey.

SAMANTHA

Mommy, my bear.

MARY ANN

Do you think he'll come tonight?

Samantha shakes her head yes.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

Okay, I guess. You let me know if he growls at you.

SAMANTHA

Okay, mommy.

Time passes and Billy and Mary Anne are back to watching TV.

Suddenly they hear Samantha giggling. They exchange a look.

MARY ANN

Our daughter is laughing in her sleep.

BILLY
She's a happy child.

The giggling continues. Mary Ann and Billy exchange a puzzled look. Mary Ann gets up and walks to Samantha's bedroom.

Peering at the doorway, Mary Ann sees Samantha laying at the foot of her bed, face towards the window. She is giggling. Randy has his front paws on the window sill and is wagging his tail. From her angle, Mary can not see through the window.

Mary Ann rushes back to the living room.

MARY ANN
(whispers)
Billy, Billy, our daughter is
laying on her bed giggling at the
window.

BILLY
Really? Did you see anything?

MARY ANN
From the door, I couldn't get a
good angle on the window.

BILLY
I think it's her imagination.

MARY ANN
Go outside and take a look.

BILLY
You want me to go outside and see
if there's a bear? Really!

MARY ANN
If there is, make a lot of noise.
Scare him off.

EXT. FARMYARD - NIGHT

Billy grabs a pot with a lid before slamming the screen door as he goes outside.

The bear runs off into the woods.

Billy bangs the pot as he creeps around the house. He comes upon Samantha's window and see's nothing. He looks around before returning to the house.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Mary Ann is standing in the kitchen when Billy comes back in.

MARY ANN

Well?

BILLY

I didn't see anything. It still
could be her imagination.

MARY ANN

That's some imagination.

They both quietly walk into Samantha's room. Samantha is under the covers with her eyes closed and Randy is asleep at the end of the bed.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Mary Ann and Samantha are shopping in a small-town, local grocery store.

SAMANTHA

Mommy, can we get some fruit?

MARY ANN

Sure, you've got a hunger for fruit
all of a sudden?

Samantha shrugs her shoulders.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, I guess.

MARY ANN

What would you like?

SAMANTHA

I don't know, berries.

MARY ANN

My little girls growing up. How
about some strawberries and some
blueberries?

SAMANTHA

Okay.

MARY ANN

And apples. You should eat an apple
a day.

SAMANTHA

Okay.

At the checkout, they are greeted by an upbeat JUANITA, an elderly hispanic lady with a big smile.

JUANITA

Hello there.

MARY ANN

Hi.

She leans over the counter to Samantha.

JUANITA

And who is this beautiful little girl?

Samantha is shy.

MARY ANN

This is Samantha and I'm Mary Ann. We're new to this area.

JUANITA

I suspected that. I haven't seen you in here before.

MARY ANN

No, we just moved to a farm outside of town.

JUANITA

Oh, I didn't know any were for sale?

MARY ANN

We inherited.

JUANITA

Really! Someone passed away?

MARY ANN

Yes, Charlie Stemple.

JUANITA

(surprised)

Charlie! I was wondering why he hadn't been in for a while. He would come in once a week and buy out all our apples.

MARY ANN

Apples? What was it with him and apples?

JUANITA

You got me. He wasn't the talkative type.

MARY ANN

My husband is his nephew.

JUANITA

Well, it's nice to see new faces.

MARY ANN

Thank you.

JUANITA

Hurry back.

INT. HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Mary Ann and Billy are sitting on the couch watching TV.

Creeping out of her bedroom, Samantha is walking down the hall. She shushes Randy who is following her. She pauses to look at her parents on the couch and when the coast is clear, she scurries to the kitchen.

Very quietly she opens the refrigerator and removes the strawberries and blueberries.

With Randy following, she slides through his doggie door.

EXT. FARMYARD - NIGHT

Samantha creeps around the house to her window. Sitting peacefully, the bear is peering through the window.

Randy goes and sits beside him.

The bear and Samantha pause to look at each other. The bear then spies the fruit.

Samantha carefully approaches and places the fruit on the ground.

The Bear looks at Samantha before gobbling up the fruit.

Samantha slowly touches the bear's head before turning and running back to the house followed by Randy.

She creeps back in through the doggie door.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mary Ann is preparing breakfast. Upon opening the refrigerator she has a puzzled look.

MARY ANN

Honey.

Billy enters the kitchen.

BILLY

What.

MARY ANN

Did you eat the strawberries?

BILLY

Nope. Not A one.

MARY ANN

How about the blueberries?

BILLY

No. I saw them in there yesterday.

He sticks his head in the refrigerator.

BILLY (CONT'D)

They're not here now.

MARY ANN

Did our daughter eat them all?

BILLY

Do you think she's getting up at night and eating?

MARY ANN

If she is she's eating something good for her.

Samantha enters the room.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

Are you hungry, dear?

SAMANTHA

Yes.

MARY ANN

I was going to make blueberry
pancakes but the blueberries are
gone. Do you know where they went?

Samantha looks down at the floor.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

Honey, it's all right if you ate
them.

BILLY

Is that what happened, you got
hungry and ate them.

SAMANTHA

No.

MARY ANN

Do you know what happened to them?

Samantha nods a yes.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

Well, what happened to them?

SAMANTHA

The bear ate them.

Billy and Mary Ann exchange a look before breaking out in
broad smiles.

BILLY

That bear must have been really
hungry.

Samantha shakes her head, yes.

MARY ANN

When don't you go get washed up for
breakfast?

Samantha runs off.

Billy and Mary Ann break out laughing.

BILLY

Oh, that's funny. Our daughter's
first fib.

MARY ANN

I guess she felt bad about eating
all the fruit.

BILLY

I bet that imaginary bear is going
to get blamed for a lot of stuff.

MARY ANN

I guess.

INT. HOUSE - SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The house is dark and quiet. Billy and Mary Ann are asleep. Samantha is in bed, wide awake staring out the window. Randy is asleep at the foot of her bed.

Slowly the bear's head pops up in the window.

Samantha sits up on one elbow and smiles.

SAMANTHA

There you are. I was worried. You
must be hungry.

She scurries out of bed waking Randy.

Slowly she creeps to the kitchen with Randy following. She pauses to put her finger to her lips to quiet Randy.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Shhhhhh.

Slowly opening the refrigerator she removes three apples.

Juggling the apples in her arms she crawls through the doggie door. Randy follows.

She slowly comes around the corner of the house and approaches a docile bear.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Hi, bear.

She places the apples on the ground.

The bear gobbles up the apples as she scratches his ear.

Randy lays down and goes to sleep.

After the bear finishes, he and Samantha stare at each other.

The bear slowly starts walking towards the woods.

Randy wakes up and follows the bear.

Samantha hesitates and calls after Randy before following.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
(low voice)
Randy, Randy, come here.

The trio is casually walking through the woods with the bear leading.

They come upon a cave. Samantha and Randy follow the bear inside.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mary Ann is in the kitchen preparing breakfast. Billy is in the shower.

Mary Ann walks into Samantha's room calling for her.

MARY ANN
Samantha.

Not seeing Samantha she looks around briefly before starting a fast search of the rest of the house. Billy joins her in the kitchen.

BILLY
What's going on?

MARY ANN
Have you seen Samantha?

BILLY
No, why? She's not in her room?

MARY ANN
No. I've looked everywhere.

BILLY
How about outside?

MARY ANN
No, would you.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

A determined Billy heads outside.

We hear him calling Samantha as he checks in and outside the barn and outbuildings.

BILLY
Samantha! Samantha, Randy!

Walking around the house, he comes to Samantha's window and discovers a berry basket. He scans the ground and discovers a small piece of apple skin.

He picks it up and examines it.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

He reenters the house, out of breath, holding the berry basket. Without saying a word he hands the basket to Mary Ann.

MARY ANN
What's this?

BILLY
I found it by her window.

MARY ANN
The strawberries!

BILLY
There were a couple of small pieces
of apple skin on the ground.

Mary Ann opens the refrigerator.

MARY ANN
There are apples missing.

They exchange a look before Billy reacts in panic.

BILLY
Call 911. Tell them we have a lost
little girl.

He runs into the bedroom and returns with the rifle.

MARY ANN
(panic)
What are you going to do?

BILLY
(panic)
Search the woods! Call!

He storms out of the house.

MARY ANN
(panic, sobbing)
Yes, I'm at the Stremple farm just
off of route 40. We woke up this
morning and our daughter was gone.
(MORE)

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

We think she's lost in the woods!
There was a bear by the house! He
may have gotten her! Thank you,
please hurry.

After a very long twenty minutes, sirens can be heard in the distance.

Mary Ann runs out to the gate and muscled it open with one big push. She runs back to the house.

Shortly three police cruisers with sirens blaring, enter the property.

They stop short and Mary Ann rushes to them.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

(frantic)

My baby! My baby is lost in the woods! She may have been taken by a bear!

OFFICER 1

Okay, ma'am, we're here to help.
When did you see her last?

MARY ANN

She was gone when we woke up.

OFFICER 2

The bear didn't get in the house,
did it?

MARY ANN

No, no sign of that!... My husband
is in the woods looking for her.

OFFICER 1

Okay, we'll organize a search. She
probably got up early and went for
a walk.

MARY ANN

Hurry!... She has her dog with her,
Randy.

OFFICER 1

(to officer 2)

Get a copter from Nashville in the
air. And call in a search party.

OFFICER 2

Right.

OFFICER 3
Hey, over there!

Officer 3 spots Billy coming out of the woods. He has a dejected look on his face.

Mary Ann runs up to him. Billy shakes his head.

BILLY
I couldn't find any tracks.

Mary Ann starts to sob.

OFFICER 1
The grounds too dry for any tracks.

Everyone looks to the sky as a helicopter arrives.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)
They'll have this area covered in a short time.

Several more police cars arrive. Two dozen officers are now organizing a search.

Suddenly an officer shouts out.

OFFICER 4
Over here!

Everybody's attention is drawn to Samantha walking along with the bear and Randy.

The officers draw a bead.

OFFICER 1
Guns down, guns down, you'll hit the girl!

Just then neighbor Jeb pulls up in his truck and jumps out.

JEB
Don't shoot, don't shoot that bear!

Jeb moves ahead of the group.

Upon seeing Jeb the bear starts to move faster.

Jeb calls to the bear.

JEB (CONT'D)
Here Apple, come here Apple!

Billy and Mary Ann exchange a knowing look.

BILLY

Apple?

Much, to everyone's astonishment, the bear hugs Jeb.

Jeb is laughing.

A very dirty Samantha runs to her mother.

MARY ANN

Honey, what happened?

SAMANTHA

(face down)

I'm sorry mommy. I followed Randy,
he followed the bear.

OFFICER 1

Did the bear hurt you?

SAMANTHA

(looking up at the
officer)

No, silly, he's my friend.

JEB

You bet you're sweet life he is.
Nicest bear you'll ever meet.

OFFICER 1

You're kidding?

Apple is calmly sitting on his haunches looking around.

JEB

Charlie had him since he was a pup.

BILLY

(to Mary Ann)

Mystery solved.

SAMANTHA

Mommy, can I give my bear some
apples.

MARY ANN

I guess so.

JEB

That's what he likes!

OFFICER 1

Well, that's the darnedest thing.
I've heard of it but never seen it.
Are you folks all right now.

BILLY

I think so. I'm sorry for all the
commotion. We didn't know.

OFFICER 1

That's all right. That's what we're
here for... If I hadn't seen it for
myself. Okay, men, wrap it up!

Start montage:

Apple is sitting at the kitchen door. Samantha comes out and places some apples at his feet.

Billy and Samantha with Apple following, walk out to the barn to put the cows and donkey to bed.

Mary Ann and Samantha are sitting at an outside table. Mary Ann is teaching Samantha how to read. They are reading the children's book, *The bear in my family*. Apple is laying next to them.

Mary Ann is hanging laundry on a line. Apple is sitting on his haunches watching her.

Billy and Samantha are fishing in the creek. Billy catches a fish and removes it from his line and tosses it to Apple.

Randy and Apple are playing.

The family is sitting at an outside table eating watermelon along with Apple joining in, sitting on the ground, next to them.

End montage:

The end.

