

THE SNIPER

Written by

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Blackness. Fighter jets ROAR overhead. The NOISE replaced by gentle BREEZES. Birds CHIRPING.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Lush and dense. Springtime green. Trees sway in gentle wind. Animals RUSTLE in the underbrush. It's peaceful. Serene.

Then, a distant RUMBLE. Like THUNDER.

In a moment, the forest returns to calm tranquility.

There's a

EXT. FALLEN TREE

With dense underbrush and a

EXT. STUMP

Nearby.

EXT. THE UNDERBRUSH

A RUSTLING. Some movement. Unnatural. Not caused by wind.

Because it's not underbrush at all. But netting. A camouflaged arm appears.

This is a

EXT. FOREST - SNIPER'S NEST

And this is THE SNIPER.

Slowly, he appears from beneath the net. Wears camo fatigues and an olive drab scarf around his head. His face painted matching the landscape.

Cautiously. Patiently. He looks around. Surveying the area.

EXT. THE FOREST

Is QUIET, except for the usual SOUNDS. The soft BREEZE WHISPERING through the trees. Birds SINGING.

EXT. THE SNIPER

Raises his rifle and looks through the scope. Searching the forest. Slowly, sweeping it back and forth

POV - SNIPER

No movement. Just tranquil forest with sunlight filtering from above.

He sweeps the area one more time.

BACK TO SCENE

Then, he lowers his rifle. Lays it down beside the fallen tree. Sits against it.

Closes weary eyes. Tilts his head back. Groans. His shoulders slump. Fatigued.

He removes a canteen from his belt and opens it. Chugs back a long draught of water. Dribbles some down his chin. Wipes the water away with his sleeve.

He closes the canteen. Replaces it in the carrier.

He leans back again. And closes his eyes. Rests for a long moment.

Without opening his eyes, he pats his breast pocket. Then, he pats the other. Opening the pocket flap, he produces a package of cigarettes.

Only one left. Grunts with disgust.

He looks around. Cautious.

Then, perches himself on the fallen log. Still looking around. Listening. His rifle nearby.

A sudden BOOM. Not thunder. Distant ARTILLERY.

He scurries behind the fallen tree. Drops the cigarette pack. Grabs his rifle. Hunkers down.

After a long moment, he rises. Through the scope of his rifle, he searches the forest.

POV SNIPER

Trees. Underbrush. No movement. Only himself.

BACK TO SCENE

He sweeps the forest a couple of times. All is QUIET. He lowers his rifle.

Relaxed, he ducks behind the fallen tree and again puts down his rifle.

Picks up the cigarettes from the forest floor and removes the cigarette from the pack.

Puts it in his mouth. Pats his pockets again. Searching. He reaches into his trouser pocket and retrieves a pack of matches.

And something else. A folded piece of paper. Not large. Somewhat crumpled and wrinkled.

He unfolds it. It's a photograph. A Woman holding a Toddler. Both smiling broadly. He smiles too. Chuckles slightly.

Rubs his thumb against the photo. As if he can touch their faces.

Then, he turns sombre. He stops rubbing the photo suddenly. Looks at it. Then, folds it up. Returning it to the pocket over his heart.

He takes out a match. Strikes it against the flint and lights the smoke.

Leans back on the tree. Closes his eyes. Takes another long draught. Content for a moment. Opens his eyes. Takes another long draught when

SNAP! A twig CRACKING.

He freezes. Doesn't make a sound.

CRACK! SNAP! As if by FOOTSTEPS.

Instantly, the Sniper squeezes off the heater of his smoke and puts the butt in his pocket.

SILENTLY, he slowly reaches for his rifle.

There's no doubt now. Those are FOOTSTEPS. Far off. But, getting closer.

Then, they STOP suddenly.

SILENCE.

The Sniper quickly pokes his head up.

Nothing. No one's there.

Nearby, twigs CRACK. The Sniper looks over.

A FIGURE, clad in black patrols the forest. This is THE SENTRY. Wears black fatigues. Black gloves. A black balaclava obscures his face.

Carries a sub-machine gun. Kneels beside a tree. Looks to the left and right. Searching for The Sniper.

But, he has yet to spot him. He keeps looking.

He pauses. Stands. Slowly moves forward.

INTERCUT: THE SNIPER/THE SENTRY

The Sniper lays prone. Unmoving. Watching his enemy. With a flick of his thumb, he switches from SAFE to FIRE.

An audible CLICK.

The Sentry freezes. Then, moves swiftly behind nearby underbrush.

He continues searching. His weapon following his gaze.

The Sniper rolls on his back. Getting his rifle into firing position. Moving SILENTLY, he agonizingly crawls to the tree stump.

The Sentry continues searching.

The Sniper moves from the prone position, getting ready to fire when

He SNAPS a twig. He freezes.

The Sentry looks over responding to the sound.

Points his weapon toward The Sniper. Raises it to shoot. About to pull the trigger when

From behind, a bird suddenly CRIES OUT.

Startled, The Sentry turns.

The Sniper has his chance. He moves swiftly, resting his elbows on the tree stump. The Sentry squarely in his scope.

The Sentry turns back toward The Sniper. SEES him. Staggered. Surprised.

The Sniper pulls the trigger. A GUNSHOT!

CUT TO:

Blackness.

HEAVY BREATHING. Followed by FOOTSTEPS racing across the forest floor.

CUT TO:

THE SNIPER

Races across the forest. His weapon at the ready.

Ahead, The Sentry's body lays inert on the ground. Unmoving.

The Sniper reaches

THE SENTRY'S BODY

And kicks away the sub-machine gun.

He stands over him. Pointing his weapon at The Sentry's chest.

He kicks the body but, it's lifeless. Doesn't move.

The Sniper looks around. There's no one else. Only the SOUNDS of the forest.

He turns his gaze back to The Sentry's body. Oddly, he cannot take his eyes from it.

He looks around again. Then

Kneels beside the body. Searching the pockets. He finds nothing. Until, he checks the breast pocket over the heart.

He removes a folded piece of paper. Somewhat crumpled and wrinkled. An edge torn.

He opens it.

It's the picture of the Woman holding the Young Child. The same as his own.

His face contorts in disbelief. As if in shock. He rubs his thumb against the photo, as before.

He kneels down beside the body. Removes the balaclava and looks at The Sentry's face.

It is his own.

FADE OUT