

Tufty

by

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Draft 2.0

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INT. TOY SHOP - DAY

An autumnal glow of nostalgia. Yesterday's toy shop, certainly not today's.

Track past board games, train sets and wooden playthings. To a small sailor-suited and cute as a button CHILD. He tugs at his MOTHER's hem, vainly reaching for a high shelf.

On the object of his attention: A brown and fluffy teddy-bear. Expensive looking, a collectors item, wasted on a child.

Closer, noticing a distinctive tuft of fur on its forehead. Pause to note its facial expression. There's something in it, indistinct but tangible. Unsettling.

Closer still and a beaded eye fills the frame reflecting the toy shop surrounding.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The very same eye reflecting moonlight dappled trees.

Take in the forest surrounding, real but lent an bucolic artifice.

On the small clearing. A 1/2 dozen or so teddy bears scattered throughout. Variously foraging, grooming each other or tumbling playfully. Contented woodland idyll abounds.

Close in on TUFTY, recognizably the bear from the toy shop. He sits just left of centre. Near him FLUFFY, smaller, cuter, female, his mate. He strains at some high hanging berries, just out of reach. Pulls at the bush, bringing the branch down a notch. Knocks a bunch to the ground. Nuzzles them towards Fluffy. She looks to the offering then to Tufty. Gives him a sweet expression, the nearest an animal can get to a smile.

Something. A scent? A sound? A presence?

Tufty pays it solitary notice, craned neck, cocked ears, scanning. Fluffy perking up, puzzled.

CUT TO:

A large heavy boot placing itself gently on to the forest floor. A dry twig cracks loudly underfoot.

CUT TO:

The pack, as one, snapping to the sound, frozen.

Their apprehension flicks to Tufty. He indicates left and right. Instant acknowledgment as the pack scatters into the undergrowth.

The ground vibrates with thudded footfalls. Smashing and crashing, closer with each thud. Something evil this way comes.

Tufty pulls at Fluffy, they break into a run, last to leave the clearing.

Through the trees, bushes and leaves, Tufty and Fluffy run and run. A force, unseen, pummels towards them in the background.

The chase, constant, unrelenting.

Fluffy stumbles and falls. A heap on the ground. Tufty reacting instantly.

Hands, human, pushing through branches.

A glimpse of a wood stock, worn with use. Light glinting off gun-metal.

Tufty helping Fluffy to her feet. Its obvious she hasn't got much of a run left in her. Tufty caresses her cheek for a moment. Something passes between. He pushes her away, onward. Fluffy, reluctant. Tufty, resolved. Another push gentle but firm and she's enveloped by trees. Tufty remains, immobile, waiting, tense and coiled.

From the trees bursts forth THE HUNTER, black clad and kitted to kill. His eyes lock on the prize, Tufty.

Tufty takes in this most dangerous of predators.

The Hunter raises his rifle, smooth and fast. Rifle-scope P.O.V. of the place where Tufty used to be.

The Hunter lets out a low grumbled curse and sets forth in pursuit.

Tufty running full pelt through the undergrowth.

The Hunter like a freight train coming from behind and gaining fast.

Tufty dashes to the side. Ducks under a fallen log and sprints on.

The Hunter following, attempting to hurdle the log but spills to the forest floor in a flurry of leaves.

Tufty looking over his shoulder to the downed Hunter.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

The remainder of the pack sit huddled together peering out of the narrow opening. They silently quiver with fear. Hope springs forth as one, Fluffy, then all, spy Tufty in the distance.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Tufty making the most of his lead breaks from the cover of the undergrowth and out into the open. His destination, the den and Fluffy within, lies at the far end of the open pasture.

The Hunter appears breathless at the edge of the pasture. He takes aim.

A shot to the right of Tufty, close enough. Tufty recoils from the impact. Running left then right Tufty begins to zig-zag

Another shot, wide.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Fluffy's paws reach out to close the distance. Tufty's close now, almost home, free and safe.

A gunshot, loud and final.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Tufty, moonlight visible through the hole in his chest. His expression: pain, defeat and the knowledge of loss. He slumps to the ground, face down into the inky blackness.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Scattered plaintive "mewp"s and "peep"s as from their P.O.V. they bear witness to their friends demise. The bears slip into the darkness as The Hunter scoops the body from the ground and tosses it into his net bag.

Fluffy, in the light, still reaching.

Tufty's lifeless arm flops through the net towards her.

It' almost as if they touch.

EXT. DARK WORKSHOP - DAY

An ill-kept Taxidermists with more than a touch of abattoir. At the doorway The Hunter stands towering above a heavily moustached man wearing a very dirty and bloody apron: THE TAXIDERMIST.

They heatedly argue in a language not too dissimilar to our own but enough for incomprehension. The Taxidermist waves Tufty pointing towards the hole in his chest. The Hunter looking somewhat defeated.

The Taxidermist chomps on his half smoked cigar stub and spits on the floor. A note is proffered. The Hunter accepts it grudgingly and exits.

INT. DARK WORKSHOP - DAY

Tufty's body dumped face up on a stainless steel table. The taxidermist wielding an ancient but well honed knife. A deft movement and an incisions made in Tufty's side. A hand reaching inside the carcass. Entrails dropped by a bloody hand into a already half full bucket.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

On Fluffy, mournfully sniffing through the grass and leaves. Her eyes fix on a large blood stain, tufts of fur: The place where her mate fell. She paws the ground, dazed with raw loss.

A nudge she ignores. Another more forceful shakes from her reverie. An older bear beside her nodding to the side.

The remaining pack gathered to the side of clearing, readying to leave.

INT. DARK WORKSHOP - DAY

On Tufty rather more 2 dimensional than before.

The Taxidermist reaching for a box marked "Anfüllen". He pulls out a wad of stuffing.

Close on intricate stitching.

A red fabric heart covering the bullet wound.

Back out to the product of his labours: Tufty as life like as he was merely hours before. The master craftsman spits a stream of tobacco juice and unceremoniously dumps the stuffed Tufty in a box brimful with bears that have met a similar fate.

EXT. STREET - DAY

On the box, emblazoned with "2 DUTZEND OBERE QUALITAT - TEDDY BEARS" as its carried along by a DELIVERY BOY.

INT. BACK OF TOYSHOP - DAY

The box signed for by a brown over-coated STORES CLERK.

INT. TOY SHOP - DAY

Follow the Stores Clerk as he brings the box out onto the shop floor and proceeds to stack the Teddies on the shelves. Tufty sits, pride of place, to the front.

A hand reaches into frame an pulls him out.

The Mother handing Tufty to the sailor suited Child. The Child beams with joy and hugs Tufty close to his chest,

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Fluffy looking back one last time as she follows the pack into the depths of the forest surrounding.

INT. TOY SHOP - DAY

Close on Tufty's face. It's almost as if his eyes meet hers.

Tufty's head lolling over the child's shoulder. They exit towards the tills.

FADE TO: BLACK

The End.