

Trapped

Written by

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OVER BLACK

A snare snaps as a small animal squeals!

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A small RABBIT thrashes among leaves - desperate for freedom. It breathes heavily. Eyes locked forward.

The struggling slows... then its heart stops.

The rabbit's eyes stare up at MASON (13). The young boy stands over the creature's lifeless body, unmoving.

Nearby, footsteps crash through the bushes. Soon, Mason's FATHER (46) bursts into the clearing with a wide grin.

FATHER

Attaboy! You got him!

He slaps Mason hard on the shoulder. The young boy stiffens.

FATHER (cont'd)

First one you set yourself, huh?

He leans in closer to Mason.

FATHER (cont'd)

Feels good, doesn't it?

Mason doesn't answer. He continues to stare at the rabbit's body - the snare wire biting into its bloody fur.

His father kneels down, quickly working the trap loose.

FATHER (cont'd)

It's real clean work. Seemed quick too! Don't worry. He didn't suffer too hard.

The wire snaps free!

A thin spray of blood flicks upward - catching Mason across the cheek.

He doesn't flinch.

His father slings the rabbit over his shoulder, still grinning from ear to ear.

FATHER (cont'd)

Your mother's gonna love this!

He begins walking off with the small prize. Mason lingers for a moment - staring at the patch of crushed leaves where the rabbit struggled. Then he follows.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

At a wooden table, Mason's MOTHER (43) sets a small bowl of stew in front of him. He stares into the bowl - chunks of the rabbit floating in a cloudy broth.

MOTHER

I still can't believe it. Your first catch!

She brushes Mason's hair back affectionately.

MOTHER (cont'd)

That's something special.

Across the table, Mason's father raises his pint of beer.

FATHER

He checked the tension twice before we left. Didn't rush it.

He turns to Mason.

FATHER (cont'd)

*That's* patience. *That's* how you do it.

Mason just stares into his bowl. Soon, a small chunk of meat floats to the surface.

MOTHER

Was it exciting?

Mason's spoon rests untouched.

FATHER

Ahh, he's just taking it in. I know I would. We'll head out early tomorrow. Check on the few traps by the creek.

He gets up and gives Mason another proud smack on the back.

FATHER (cont'd)

(grinning)

Maybe this time we'll get something bigger. Ha!

His parents break into a small laughter. With that, Mason finally lifts his spoon. He brings it toward his mouth... his hand twitching.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

A streak of mist hangs low between a sea of pine trees.

Slowly, Mason trails behind his father along a narrow path.

FATHER

I'll go and check the ridge line. Go  
see the snares down by the creek.

Without a second look, the older hunter races off into the distance. Mason slowly turns and makes his way down to the creek.

EXT. FOREST CREEK - DAY

A shallow stream of cold water runs slowly over sharp rocks.

Mason carefully walks along the bank.

SNAP!

The boy freezes.

A small, sharp yelp pierces the air. Mason turns toward the sound, stepping over stones and brush.

On the ground, a FOX, young and lean, is caught in a snare. It thrashes weakly - one of its back legs twisted tight inside the sharp wire. Blood darkens the fur near the wound.

Mason steps closer.

The fox bares its teeth - then stops. Too exhausted.

Their eyes meet.

Soon, the animal begins to tremble. Its breathing slows.

FATHER (O.S.)

(shouting)

You find anything?

Mason looks back toward the trees. Branches crack as he spots his father running towards him.

Mason turns back to the fox. The wire cuts deeper each time the creature struggles to break free. It's chest rises, falls, then slowly rises again.

Mason kneels down next to the fox. His fingers hover over the snare.

FATHER (O.S.) (cont'd)  
(shouting)  
Mason?

Mason grips the wire. It bites into his skin as he twists it loose. The fox jerks - nearly catching his hand with its teeth. Mason doesn't pull away.

He forces the sharp wire loop wider and wider.

Suddenly, the snare slips free!

The fox collapses for a moment - stunned. Then, it scrambles up and looks at Mason. The boy stares back.

In a flash the creature dashes off toward the far side of the creek. Soon, it disappears into the forest.

Mason stays kneeling, breathing hard. He looks down at his hands, they're scraped raw. Thin lines of blood seep across them. He quickly wipes them against his pants.

EXT. FOREST CREEK - MOMENTS LATER

Finally, his father emerges through the bushes, slightly winded. He spies Mason in the clearing.

FATHER  
(grinning)  
So... what'd we get?

Mason slowly turns around, sliding his hands behind his back. He steps aside, showing off the empty trap.

His father frowns and steps past him. he looks down at the sprung trap.

Empty.

FATHER (cont'd)  
(shakes head)  
Damn. Must've slipped it. They don't  
always hold.

He turns back and grabs Mason's shoulder.

FATHER (cont'd)  
Come. We'll check the others.

He starts guiding him back up the bank. As they climb, Mason glances back.

Across the creek - the fox stands between the trees. It's injured leg barely touching the ground.

Still.

Watching.

The fox holds his gaze. Mason stares back.

Then - it turns and disappears into the forest once more.

Mason faces forward and walks on.

FADE TO BLACK