

WHAT DIVIDES US

Written by Chris Holt

August 2023

8 Harold White Close, Headington, Oxford, OX3 8EL  
M: +447849 541310  
E: [chrisdavidholt88@gmail.com](mailto:chrisdavidholt88@gmail.com)  
© Copyright Chris Holt 2023

In the heart of Galloway Forest Park, Scotland, a picturesque panorama unfolds before us. Scottish pine and larch trees gracefully sway in the gentle breeze, their canopies casting dancing shadows across the sprawling valleys and hilltops.

This pristine wilderness boasts serene lakes and ancient rock formations that seem to stretch endlessly into the distant horizon, creating a timeless tapestry of nature's grandeur.

Yet, amidst this tranquil beauty, a stark reminder of human impact emerges - a weathered plastic WATER BOTTLE, partly filled with rainwater and soil, protrudes from the mud, bearing witness to the careless disregard for the environment.

Nearby, a used PLASTIC SHOPPING BAG dangles from a tree, ensnared by an outstretched branch, underscoring the persistence of our ecological footprint even in the remote corners of the forest.

Suddenly, a SQUAWK pierces the calm, originating just beyond the nearest flora. A trapped squirrel confined within a SMALL CAGE becomes apparent. Kneeling beside the cage, LAURA, (30s) with long auburn hair cascading loosely by her chest, gazes upon the distressed animal.

With tenderness, Laura extends a morsel of BREAD through the cage roof, offering it to the captive squirrel. The creature reaches up to nibble it. She hovers her fingers over the cage latch, torn between releasing the squirrel back into the wild and keeping it safe from the perils of the forest.

ZOE O.S

What're you doing?

In marches ZOE, (30's), a slim, athletic woman with a dark skin complexion. She wears practical cargo trousers and a tank top that sports a light utility belt around the waist. She has a LARGE HUNTING KNIFE tucked into a HOLSTER and other practical gear such as WIRE, CARABINERS, FLASHLIGHT and a SMALL POUCH.

Her abruptness startles Laura as she drops down beside her, checking the cage lock.

ZOE

How are we supposed to eat if you keep releasing them?

LAURA

Thought we could let this one go and find something... Bigger?

ZOE

Laura, we have to catch what we can. If we don't eat now, when will we? This is the only thing we've caught in days.

Laura droops her head sorrowfully and eyes the squirrel one last time.

Zoe, infuriated, picks up the cage and strides off.

ZOE (CONT'D)

(turning her head)

Well? You coming then?

Sighing, Laura climbs to her feet.

EXT. FOREST EDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Laura wades through the thick brush, before bumping into Zoe.

Before she asks her what's happening she looks down. Staring at the same thing Zoe is-

-A body on the ground, half sunken into the undergrowth.

Zoe studies the corpse carefully, gently scanning the body for clues-

- The leg, broken and torn near the ankle. Ligaments dry and mutilated.

The foot, caught inside the lethal, rustic jaws of a BEAR TRAP.

Laura gasps over her shoulder.

LAURA

Jesus that's disgusting.

ZOE

Not a great way to go.

LAURA

Shall we leave it?

ZOE

That device looks useful though.

LAURA

You can't be serious? It's a little inhumane.

ZOE

We're not exactly, abundant on food though. Leave it for now, I'll come back later. Stay alert.

They move on cautiously -- Laura visibly shaken.

2 EXT. CARAVAN GROUNDS - DAY 2

A large four-berth CARAVAN sits in a field close to a long tree-line.

It's isolated and hidden away from any road, building or man-made structure.

A rusted CAR is attached to the caravans tow-bar.

3 INT. CARAVAN - DAY 3

The interior is as clean as it can be -- it's cluttered with an array of kitchen utensils such as CUTLERY, POTS, PANS and CAMPING STOVES.

BAGS, ANIMAL TRAPS and RAGS are stuffed into any available storage compartment or space.

A double-bed is located at the back of the caravan and a small one-person toilet is built in the centre, opposite the kitchen gangway.

Zoe is boiling water over a portable camping stove on the kitchen counter. Beside it is an EMPTY WATER BOTTLE and a GLASS with a SIEVE resting on top.

There is a murky tub of collected rain water beside the stove and the gas hob has a frying pan sizzling small chunks of SQUIRREL meat in it.

She positions her knife over a carrot, but her hand shakes uncontrollably. She sets the knife aside and, with her free hand, gently clasps it. She takes a deep breath, briefly tensing his shoulders, and releases a long exhale before resuming her grip on the knife.

4 INT. CARAVAN TOILET - DAY 4

Laura sits inside the toilet exhausted from sobbing.

She rubs her tired eyes. The sound of a PORTABLE BLOOD PRESSURE MONITOR buzzes as it inflates on her right arm.

Her left arm is lined with self-inflicted scars that have healed untidily.

Wiping away her dried tears, she checks the pump gauge -- It's high.

She pulls out a PEN and jots down her results on her arm underneath several other recordings. The numbers have increased each time since the last recorded result.

Removing the device she then flushes the toilet before composing herself in the mirror, taking a deep breath and exiting.

5

INT. CARAVAN - DAY

5

Zoe bundles small pieces of cooked squirrel meat into a cup and places it on the dining table next to the chopped carrots and a glass of water.

ZOE

Breakfast?

Laura shakes her head in the negative.

LAURA

Unless its eggs royale?

ZOE

Of course. With bacon and hollandaise sauce and a nice cuppa with two sugars?

Laura sinks her head.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Just sit down and hold your nose.

It really isn't that bad.

(beat)

Don't let our little squidge suffer 'cause you're fussy.

Laura eases onto the bench, tenderly cradling her belly.

Zoe joins her, removing a chunk of squirrel meat and casually tossing it into her mouth.

ZOE (CONT'D)

It's well-done, so you'll be fine. Pretend it's like traditional Christmas Eve fondue.

Laura removes a small chunk of meat from the cup and reluctantly places it in her mouth, chewing it with anguish.

She grabs a handful of carrots and palms them in to disguise the taste of cooked squirrel -- Zoe chuckles.

ZOE (CONT'D)

See?

LAURA

(mouthful)

It's disgusting.

ZOE

No, it's not! A bit chewy, yeah. We've eaten far worse. Remember that roadkill we had? On a positive note, I've seen some venison strolling the forest. Might make for a tasty meal at some point if I can catch it.

Laura takes another chunk and eats it, washing it down with a slurp of water.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Here.

Zoe slides across a small sachet of SALT from a fast food restaurant.

LAURA

I'd kill to have some ketchup.

Zoe chuckles again.

ZOE

I'll keep my eye out.

Laura's half-smile fades.

LAURA

You're going out again, aren't you?

ZOE

Running low on bog roll. Take it you don't wanna hang out the door to take a piss? Or use *dock leaves*? We've got about a days drinking water too. Barely any bandages.

Laura chews her bottom lip nervously.

LAURA

I know. It's just so dangerous out there. Especially after seeing that man.

ZOE

I take precautions.

LAURA

I know you do. I know. But it's just... The more times we venture out there, the more risks we take.

ZOE

We haven't got a choice.

Laura's eyes gaze to the table - she says nothing.

There is an awkward pause.

LAURA

If you find any soft slippers whilst you're out, that would be amazing. My feet are killing me.

ZOE

What about a bath robe too?

LAURA

That too. My feet feel gross, they're all puffy and swollen.

ZOE

I can only carry what I can.

Laura, frustrated and uncomfortable, shuffles out from the table knocking a glass off, which SMASHES underneath the table.

LAURA

(turning annoyed)

Argh. I feel so big and bloated in this tiny rust bucket. I need space.

ZOE

Laura! You need to relax. You're days away from popping. Just watch yourself.

LAURA

It's easy for you to say. I stay in these four walls twenty-four-fucking-seven. It's like being in prison.

Zoe, angrily rises from her seat.

ZOE

We were out this morning! You nearly let our breakfast go, remember?

LAURA

Oh wow. Yeah, real freedom. Yard time for a few hours a week.

ZOE

What'd ya want me to do about it?

Laura groans and shakes her head disparagingly.

LAURA

It was your fucking idea to start a family in the first place! Now fucking look at us.

Zoe recoils her head in shock, her expression says it all.

Laura knows she's overstepped the mark.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Zoe, I didn't mean that..

Zoe stands, blatantly upset, shakes her head in the negative.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Zoe. Please, I didn't...

Laura, filled with guilt, inches forward to comfort Zoe, but she rejects her.

ZOE

Just... Stop.

Laura, lowers her head, ashamed of her words.

LAURA

I'm sorry.

Zoe brushes past Laura toward the bedroom, slamming the door shut.

Laura closes her eyes for a moment, regretting her words.



6 EXT. CARAVAN GROUNDS - DAY 6

Dark clouds roll across the blank grey sky as time passes.

Tree's sway in a light breeze as the caravan sits idle amongst the wild weeds and unkempt grass beside it.

7 INT. CARAVAN - LATER 7

Laura washes up the last few bits of cutlery with bottled water and a HOTEL SOAP bar before drying them with a worn rag.

She then empties BROKEN GLASS SHARDS with a dust-pan into a bin bag.

Zoe's sat at the kitchen table attempting to fix a small, handheld radio with her screwdriver - getting frustrated as she does.

Once Laura's finished cleaning, she takes a moment to stare out the musty window to the horizon.

The hills roll out to the beyond. The forest sways gently at the edge of the field.

A kestrel hovers in flight in the distant sky above, hunting its prey in its natural habitat. She watches as it soars freely by itself, unbothered by anything else, unchanged by any events down below.

It slowly dips and then swoops toward the ground, plucking a small animal from the earth beneath it before soaring off out of sight.

Her gaze is broken by the SLAMMING of a screwdriver.

Proud of herself, Zoe sits up, smiles and turns to Laura.

ZOE

Fixed it.

Laura reluctantly smiles back.

Zoe stands to grab a duffle bag from one of the overhead cupboards.

She places it on the kitchen table and turns to Laura.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Go on then.

Laura rolls her eyes and slumps into the seat.

She unzips the bag and begins removing items - BANDAGES, LIGHTER, PORTABLE GAS STOVE, BOTTLED WATER, BISCUITS, PENKNIFE, MAP and a PORTABLE RADIO.

ZOE (CONT'D)

So, remember you need to check the radio-

LAURA

(interjecting)

-Everyday. Midday. For ten minutes at a time. Zoe, it's been at least five days! You really think he's still trying it?

ZOE

I can't give up... He won't.

LAURA

I hope you're right.

ZOE

I know it. Trust me.

Laura sighs and shakes her head.

She continues to study the radio, searching for the 'ON' button.

Zoe tuts and snatches it back.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Switch it on with the frequency navigator - to channel nine, forty-four-six point eight. There's no 'on' button as such.

LAURA

I know, just give me a second!

ZOE

Out here, seconds are a matter of life and death.

Laura angers.

LAURA

I'm not gonna get killed turning the radio on.

ZOE

Laura, this is the third fucking time we've been through this. If I'm not here, then what?

(MORE)

ZOE (CONT'D)

How are you gonna get through the day? I've shown you how to do so many things, but most of the time you're either daydreaming or not even listening.

LAURA

Oh cut me some slack. I didn't grow up learning how to skin a deer or zip wire through the jungle - and I'm growing a bloody human inside me.

Zoe sighs and leans back. Laura sulks for a moment.

ZOE

I haven't got time for this now.  
Gotta go before it gets dark.

Laura sags down on the end of the dining bench, loosely clutching the radio, feeling useless.

Zoe moves over to another overhead cupboard and collects her utility belt and knife. She grabs another OVER SHOULDER BAG, pulls out a FLASHLIGHT, clicks it on and off a few times, then heads for the door.

She pauses, resting her hand on the handle, takes a breath and turns to Laura-

ZOE (CONT'D)

Slippers, yeah?

Laura, surprised, looks up and smiles.

ZOE (CONT'D)

No promises. Check the radio.  
Listen out for my Dad. I'll be back  
before dark.

Laura nods.

LAURA

Zoe! Wait.

Zoe pauses.

Laura gets up from the table and moves closer to her. She leans in to Zoe to give her a hug.

Zoe opens her arms and they embrace one another for a moment.