

Of the Forest

By

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An Original Screenplay

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INT.SELF STORAGE OFFICE-NIGHT

A bell tinkles as KAREN PARKER (20's) walks through the the door into a brightly lit office. Neatly stacked packing boxes of various sizes, rolls of masking tape line one wall. There's a waist high counter and an open door behind it where a woman, LINA (60's) can be seen sitting on a couch watching television. Sounds of a game show can be heard softly. At the counter stands GERALD (60's) dressed in blue slacks and a white shirt. Karen walks up to the desk.

GERALD

Can I help you?

KAREN

I need to rent a space. I just got into town and I really don't want to haul all this junk around while I look for an apartment.

Gerald stares at her for a moment as though tortured by what ever thoughts were being formulated.

KAREN

Well?

Gerald lowers his voice.

GERALD

I'm afraid we're full up. I reserved the last one this morning.

KAREN

Do you know of any other places near by?

LINA (O'S.)

(Speaks with an Romanian accent)

Space 34 empty.

Karen looks hopeful.

Gerald looks at Karen with sadness in his eyes. Gerald turns toward Lina.

GERALD

(To Lina)

No. I rented it out already.

Lina appears in the doorway, smiling.

LINA

Don't listen to the old fool. He wouldn't know what day it was if I wasn't around to remind him.

GERALD

(Nervously)

I...no...I'm sure I rented it out.

KAREN

Look, I really need somewhere to dump this stuff. I promise it won't be here any longer than a few days.

Gerald glances back at Lina, a cold look in his eyes. Lina ignores the look and walks up to the counter.

LINA

Don't worry, Sweetie. We got you covered. We reserved space 33 this morning. I'm positive space 34 is available. Let me get keys.

Lina goes into the back room.

An uncomfortable silence settles on the office for a moment.

Lina returns and smiling, holds out her hand.

LINA

I'm Lina.

KAREN

Karen.

Karen shakes her hand.

LINA

There is door at end of building. Just bring car around. I meet you there.

KAREN

Thank you. You don't know how much I appreciate this. My car looks like I live it it.

LINA

(To Gerald/sarcastically)

The gate still need fixing if you're not to busy.

Gerald turns and walks into the back room.

Lina turns to Karen and shakes her head.

LINA
Men. I swear, if not for midnight
fringe benefits...

Lina smiles at Karen.

LINA CONT.
I'd have traded him for dog years
ago.

Lina opens the door and the two exit.

INT.SELF STORAGE BUILDING/STAIRWELL-NIGHT

The stairwell is dimly lit. Lina is leading the way as Karen follows behind carrying a few boxes.

KAREN
I guess this is one way of getting
a little exercise.

LINA
Who needs gym, eh?

KAREN
If you don't mind my asking, where
are you from? I love the accent.

LINA
San Francisco.

KAREN
Oh.

Lina laughs.

LINA
Just a joke. I'm from Romania.

They reach a landing and stop.

KAREN
That's so cool. Is it just you and
your husband?

LINA
Oh, Gerald's not my husband. He's
my boyfriend.

Lina winks at Karen.

Karen smiles.

LINA

I come here three years ago with my son, Silviu.

KAREN

What a beautiful name.

Lina holds the door open for Karen. Karen enters hallway. Lina follows.

INT.SELF STORAGE BUILDING/HALLWAY-DAY

The hallway is very dimly lit. A long, quiet, empty corridor goes right and left, lined with doors on both sides.

LINA

Yes, it is. It means, hmm...in your language, "of the forest" or something like that.

Karen stares down the corridor. Dim light are space every twenty feet leaving the areas between in darkness.

KAREN

A little creepy.

Lina laughs and pats Karen on the back.

LINA

Don't be frightened. Nothing but a lot of unwanted junk here. But one man's junk is another man's treasure, eh? We have an old saying in my country "Long absent, soon forgotten."

KAREN

Which way?

Lina points to the left. they begin to walk.

LINA

You are very pretty young woman. You have boyfriend back home?

KAREN

Not any more. Here's a bit of American wisdom for you. Never get involved with a man that's prettier than you are.

LINA

Yes. Better to ride on ass that carries me than horse that throws me.

Karen laughs.

KAREN

Amen to that. Is you son married?

Lina stops. Sadness in her eyes.

LINA

We came to America because of my son's medical condition.

KAREN

I'm so sorry. Is he going to be all right?

Lina gives a tight-lipped smile.

LINA

It's not life threatening, thank God.

Lina quickly does the sign of the cross.

LINA CONT.

More of a birth defect. I just want him to have normal life. But we must count our blessings. Better mouse in pot, than no meat at all.

KAREN

I'm sure everything will work out.

They begin walking again.

LINA

You seem like nice girl. Silviu would like you.

Karen just smiles.

They stop facing the last door on the corridor marked #34.

LINA

Here we are.

KAREN

I just want to thank you again. I really appreciate it.

LINA

No need.

Lina unlocks the pad lock and opens the door. The inside of the room is very dark.

LINA

You need to buy lock.

KAREN

No problem.

Karen looks nervously around. She sees deep gouges and scratches on the inside of the door; the exposed wood stained dark.

Lina sees her apprehension and shakes her head.

LINA

Kids always wrecking things. I told Gerald to fix that.

KAREN

Is there a light?

LINA

My, my. You are skiddish as new born colt. I hold boxes. Light has pull string. To high for me to reach.

KAREN

I'm sorry. Old childhood fear.

Karen hands Lina the boxes and steps into the dark room.

INT.STORAGE ROOM-NIGHT

The is so pitch black it's impossible to even determine the size of the room. Karen takes a few steps, stops and turns to Lina.

Although only a few feet away in the open doorway, to Karen it looks much farther. Lina is smiling warmly.

Karen begins walking into the room. Something touches her face. She gasps, barely holds back a scream. It's the pull string. She laughs. She gives it a tug. Nothing happens.

KAREN

I think the light's out.

Suddenly a creaking comes from behind. Karen spins as the door is slowly closed. The sound of the deadbolt reaches her ears.

She spins and runs to the door.

KAREN

This isn't funny, Lina. Open the door please.

Karen pounds on the door.

KAREN CONT.

Open the damn door or I'm calling the police. I mean it.

Karen takes her cell phone out of her pocket. Suddenly she hears a noise behind her in the darkness. She begins feverishly pounding on the door.

KAREN CONT.

Please open the door. Please...

INT.SELF STORAGE BUILDING/HALLWAY-NIGHT

Lina, back to the door, hears the plaintive cries coming from within. Her face is tight, eyes closed.

INT.STORAGE ROOM-NIGHT

Karen touches the screen on her cell phone. It lights up. She sees there are no bars. It's a dead zone.

The light from the phone does little to dispel the gloom and still leaves the room in dark shadows. She uses the cell phone like a flash light and slowly surveys the room.

The area is quite large and mostly empty except for a row of boxes stacked like a wall at the back and a very large wooden crate open at one end.

She slowly moves closer to the crate. She hears another sound, but it seems farther away. She reaches the crate and shines a light in it. The crate is empty and there's a large hole torn in the wall. She can see into the next unit.

INT.SELF STORAGE BUILDING/HALLWAY-NIGHT

Lina is leaning back against the door, arms hugging herself tightly. A noise to her left gets her attention. Her eyes go wide as she sees there is no pad lock on the door. The door crashes outward.

LINA

Oh, Silviu.

Her face appears sad and full of love at the same time.

INT.STORAGE ROOM-NIGHT

A high-pitched scream comes from outside the door.

Karen looks back at the door. Suddenly the door begins to shake as vicious clawing sounds mingled with more screams reach her ears. Karen enters the crate and scrambles through the hole in the wall.

INT.SELF STORAGE BUILDING/HALLWAY-NIGHT

Karen explodes through the door into the hallway and not looking back, runs toward the exit. A guttural howl fills the corridor behind her. Heavy footfalls are suddenly coming fast behind her. She reaches the door and yanks it open. The door is forcibly slammed shut. Karen turns. A huge shadow falls across her. A loud, animal-like roar causes her hair to move. She faints and collapses to the ground.

INT.SELF STORAGE OFFICE-NIGHT

Gerald is standing at the counter. Tears filling his eyes. A pad lock is sitting on the counter in front of him. A long, muted, animal-like howl from nearby reaches his ears. He lowers his head.

One Month Later

INT.SELF STORAGE OFFICE-DUSK

A bell tinkles as young WOMAN (20's) walks through the the door into a brightly lit office. Neatly stacked packing boxes of various sizes, rolls of masking tape line one wall. There's a waist high counter and an open door behind it. Sounds of a game show can be heard softly. At the counter stands a young, dark-haired MAN (30) dressed in blue slacks and a white shirt, his back to her, filing some

papers in a metal file cabinet. The woman walks up to the desk.

The man turns his head to her and smiles.

WOMAN

I sure hope you can help me. I just got into town and need to store some things.

The man shuts the cabinets and steps up to the counter.

MAN

(Romanian accent)

I think we can help.

The woman looks at the name embroidered on his shirt.
"Silviu"

WOMAN

What a lovely name.

KAREN (O.S.)

It means of the forest or something silly like that.

Karen walks from the back room into the office and smiles.

KAREN CONT.

Why don't you pull your car around the back.

FADE