

POND LIFE

Written by

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FADE IN:

SERIES OF SHOTS - HERE COME THE BOYS

-- Two tiny dots climb over a fence bordering a corn field.
-- The dots grow as they cross the field.
-- The dots pass the remains of burnt out windmill.
-- Bigger dots stumble through a field of rapeseed.
-- Two children jump over a drainage ditch.
-- Two boys push into a clump of trees.

EXT. SMALL COPSE - DUSK

DAZZER, 8, built like a sturdy barrel, strides purposefully through shrubs and thorn bushes that block his way.

DAZZER
(over his shoulder)
Keep up.

GLEN, 7, smaller in stature and demeanour, follows him, breathing heavy.

GLEN
Slow down.

Dazzler ignores him and pushes through a dense thicket.

Glen stops, hands on knees.

DAZZER (O.S.)
C'mon.

Glen shakes his head.

Wades into the bushes, through to...

EXT. SMALL POND - CONTINUOUS

The tar-black surface of the pond shimmers. The low bank is entangled in bushes, brambles and overhanging branches.

Dazzler stands by the edge, pulls a clump of wild daisies from a patch nearby.

Sounds of breaking sticks and branches forced apart.

He throws a flower onto the water, then another.

Glen finally stumbles through, spits out a mouthful of twigs and leaves as he reaches his mate.

DAZZER
Shhssh, ya great big lummoX.

Glen pulls up.

GLEN
C'mon, it's getting dark.

Dazzer points to a far corner, where bubbles pop gently.

DAZZER
See, told ya.

GLEN
It's just bubbles, gas or fish
farts or somat.

A bush RUSTLES.

Glen glances nervously around.

Dazzer grins mischievously at his discomfort.

DAZZER
No, told ya, it's a monster.

GLEN
Ain't no such thing as monsters.

DAZZER
Is so, least here there is.

GLEN
You're just trying to spook me up.

RUSTLES come again.

Both boys jump a little.

DAZZER
Swear, Ben said he'd seen it.

GLEN
Your brother's an idiot.

Dazzer looks affronted.

DAZZER
Doesn't mean he didn't see it!

He throws another flower onto the pond.

DAZZER
And that girl Maria drowned too.

GLEN
What, here?

Dazzer shrugs.

A low GROWL from behind.

GLEN
What... what, was that?

DAZZER
Monster.

GLEN
You're just trying to scare me.

Dazzer shakes his head, emphatically.

DAZZER
No, that wasn't me.

The GROWL comes again, accompanied by a loud RUSTLE.

GLEN
So what is it?

The wind moans in the trees, a distant banshee wail.

The boys glance nervously at each other.

DAZZER
Dunno, but I'm outta here.

He spins on his heels, runs, smashes into the bushes.

Glen is alone.

The GROWL comes again, nearer, urgent, feral and hungry.

Wind buffets him as he runs into the foliage.

CRACK, Glen's head connects with a thick branch.

He rebounds backwards, eyelids fluttering...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

EXT. POND - NIGHT

Glen comes to, eyes blink, adjust to moonlight.

GLEN

Daz?

The wind howls in response.

He stands, unsteady.

The wind creates ripples on the pond.

Did something undulate beneath the surface?

GLEN

(louder)

Daz?

No answer, just the baying gale.

He looks round, no sign of a way in, only a thick barrier of bushes, trees and undergrowth.

He shoves himself in.

EXT. SMALL COPSE - CONTINUOUS

Glen plunges in deeper, ignores branches as they scratch and tear at him.

Dark shapes loom ahead, arms reach for him.

He ducks, instinctive, fear reflex.

Just more branches.

GLEN

Anyone, please help me!

The wind answers with a scream, buffets him backwards.

Glen falls to his knees.

A hand grabs his shoulder from behind.

Glen's turn to scream into the night.

He's up, runs.

He careens into tree trunks without breaking stride.

Ignores cuts and lashes from overhanging branches.

He barely notices when his knee connects with a rock.
His leg notices and buckles under, headlong into a puddle.
A dark shape behind, crashes through trees, echoes his footsteps, nearly upon him.
He crawl-runs into dense bushes.
Stops.
Puts his hand over his mouth.
Stares out between the leaves.
The dark shape nears.
Glimpses of dark moss-green swim in and out of view.
Glen's eyes go wide as the shape fills more of his view.
Hand clamps tighter, stifle a scream
The dark shape moves away, crashes into trees to his right.
His eyes follows the monsters's noisy trail.
Finally, he moves his hands and exhales a shuddering breath.
He crawls quietly out of the bush.
The wind moans low, no longer whipping foliage into a frenzy.
No sign or sound of the monster.
Glen runs in the opposite direction, picking his steps carefully as to make as little noise as possible.
More trees try catch him, roots attempt to trip him, but their efforts are lethargic.

GLEN
C'mon, almost.

He can sense escape, optimism touches his face.
Light flickers ahead.
Glen elbows branches aside, jumps through to his salvation.

EXT. SMALL POND - CONTINUOUS

Moonlight glints off the pond's surface.

Glen's arm windmill, his balance betrays him as he teeters forward and falls.

The pond waits to catch him.

He hits the water with a loud splash.

Cold water jars him to action, arms and legs a flurry of motion as he doggy paddles towards the bank.

A shape moves through tress, into view.

Glen can see the monster fully.

Scales exist where skin should be, gills line the neck and the eyes...

Reptilian, luminescent in the night.

Glen SCREAMS.

Back pedals towards the distant bank.

The monster makes a guttural noise and beckons Glen.

Glen thrashes faster in the water.

The monster walks forward, slips gracefully into the pond.

It disappears from view, passage devoid of ripples.

Glen treads water, spins round, eyes wild, searching.

He swims forward.

Inches from the bank, the pond surface erupts to his side, a broiling mess of bubbles and water droplets.

Glen swims to the side, scared into quick strokes.

A shape in the water ahead of him.

Pale, below the surface, beckoning.

He thrusts his head beneath to get a better look.

Dazzer is moored to the pond floor, roots and branches encircle his limbs and waist.

One arm missing, just a bloody stump remains, a trickle of blood escapes into the water.

His eyes stare blankly up at Glen.

Glen surfaces, retches and sucks air at the same time.
The monster stares into his eyes from a few inches away.
Petrified, he forgets to swim and starts to sink.
The monster catches him before he's totally submerged.
Pulls him up and close.
Glen can smell him, rotten fish, nose wrinkles in disgust.
Glen kicks, arms lash out, a seething mass of energy.
It does nothing to break the monster's vice like grip.
Glen's eyes go wild, his breath short.
In desperation, he shoves his hands into the monster's gills
and yanks hard.
The monster yelps, lets him go, scaly hands go to it's neck.
Glen kicks back, plants his feet against the monsters sternum
and propels backwards.
The monster sinks out of view.
Glen hits the bank with his head, flips himself over and
shoots up onto land.
He smashes through the trees, arms up defensively.
He doesn't look back.

FADE OUT.

THE END