

JACKALOPE

Written by

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LOG: When a father brings his adult son on a trip to hunt the Jackalope, the two must confront their elusive relationship.

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INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

An odd, dim room. Various creatures are mounted on the walls. People in varying hunting gear sit and wait. Some hold crossbows or spears, others carry large nets.

Father-son WILLIAM (70s) and ART (30s) sit side-by-side. They're normal, and that makes them out of place. William holds a rifle; Art wouldn't dare.

RECEPTIONIST

NEXT.

William appears. The tired RECEPTIONIST doesn't look at him.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Name?

WILLIAM

Howdy! We're here for the contest.

She looks at him.

RECEPTIONIST

Name?

WILLIAM

William Cook.

RECEPTIONIST

And...?

William turns. Art looks up, clueless.

WILLIAM

That's my son.

RECEPTIONIST

(sarcastic)

Congratulations. What's his name?

WILLIAM

Oh! His name is Arthur.

The receptionist types. It takes a little too long.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You know, he flew out all the way from Los Angeles for this. We used to attend every year, but hoo-boy, it's been a little while now.

RECEPTIONIST

Mhm.

WILLIAM

He used to beg me to take him here.
I always thought it was sort of
silly.

She types.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

But y'know it's kinda nice being
back--

RECEPTIONIST

The contest ends at midnight
tonight. Bring in your find before
then to receive the reward.

She slides a paper across the desk: "REWARD \$10,000." Art's
head shoots up. He eyes the paper.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Here's your info sheet. Good luck
and happy hunting.

She lays down a second piece of paper. At the top it reads:
"102ND ANNUAL JOHNSON COUNTY JACKALOPE HUNT"

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

NEXT.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

William and Art walk along a small trail. Art has a large net
and William totes his rifle.

WILLIAM

So! What are you up to these days?

ART

Not much.

William nods.

WILLIAM

Are you making anything cool?

ART

Yeah, I'm still working.

WILLIAM

That's great. Anything new you can
show off?!

ART

No, I um... I don't have anything on me.

William nods. They continue in silence.

WILLIAM

Do you remember the first time we came out here?

ART

I guess?

WILLIAM

It was your eighth birthday, and you came running up to me with this old, dirty flyer. You begged me to take you!

ART

I don't think I remember that.

WILLIAM

You insisted on buying the "jackalope call" from the office. You don't remember?!

Art shakes his head.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You wanted to find one so bad, you kept asking me if we could stay all night.

ART

And you kept saying we couldn't.

A branch SNAPS.

WILLIAM

Did you hear that?

William readies his rifle and moves to the side of the trail.

ART

Dad, come on.

WILLIAM

Shh... hand me the call.

Art rolls his eyes. He reaches into a bag and retrieves a small whistle-shaped object. He hands it to William.

William blows into it. It SCREECHES, halfway between a human screaming and a spring bouncing. Something moves.å

ART
You can't be--

A BULLET CRACKS.

ART (CONT'D)
Jesus dad! What the hell!?

WILLIAM
Still got it.

He chambers the rifle professionally.

ART
Got what?!

William smiles at him.

WILLIAM
The Jackalope.

ART
What?!

WILLIAM
Come on!

William jumps towards the kill. Art looks at him, disgusted.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

William looks down at the ground, troubled. Art approaches.

ART
Jesus. Dad!

On the ground, a small bird lies, injured.

ART (CONT'D)
What the fuck!

WILLIAM
I could've sworn...

ART
It was what, a Jackalope!? Are you kidding me?!?

Art walks away, fuming.

WILLIAM
 Arty, hey! Why do you say it like that?

ART
 Like what, like it's not real?

WILLIAM
 I--

ART
 Because it's not! Are you kidding me?

WILLIAM
 Arthur, can we please not argue.

Art stops at the edge of the clearing, back to his father.

ART
 Why did you invite me here?

WILLIAM
 I'm sorry?

Art turns.

ART
 Why? To catch a Jackalope? Really?

William stares at him.

ART (CONT'D)
 We stopped doing this when I was sixteen. Do you want to know why, Dad? Because I was embarrassed.

Art walks past his father and crouches next to the bird. He pulls his jacket off and wraps the bird in it.

WILLIAM
 So why did you come?

ART
 Because you never wanted to do anything else with me.

WILLIAM
 I don't mean back then. Why did you come now?

Art stops. He sighs.

ART
There's a taxidermy rabbit and
horns in the car.

WILLIAM
What?

ART
I'm broke, Dad.

He picks up the bird, and starts back towards the trail.
William watches him.

WILLIAM
I wanted to spend time with you.

ART
I'm sorry?

WILLIAM
I invited you here because I wanted
to spend time with you.

Art turns.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Arthur, I haven't seen you in
years. I don't know where you're
living, I don't know what you're
working on. I feel like I don't
know you.

ART
I didn't think you cared.

WILLIAM
Of course I care. You think I
believed in the "Jackalope?" I
didn't know how else to connect
with you!

ART
You could've just talked to me!

William stares at him.

WILLIAM
I never had what you and your
mother did.

ART
Dad...

WILLIAM

GOD! I wanted to talk to you,
but... I didn't know how. This was
all I could give you.

William's eyes shimmer and he turns, hiding his face. Art hugs him. The bird sits gently at their feet.

ART

We're talking now.

William awkwardly raises his arms, but slowly falls into a comfortable hug. They embrace tightly.

WILLIAM

I'm glad you brought me that flyer.

A branch CRACKS.

ART

Dad... Behind you...

WILLIAM

I know, it's behind me. It's behind
both of us.

ART

No dad, turn around.

William pulls away, blinking hurriedly. Art stares, his mouth slightly agape.

WILLIAM

What?

He turns, and his mouth falls open. In the clearing behind them, a JACKALOPE sits curiously. It tilts its head at them, before hopping off.

William grabs Art's net and smiles at him. Art smiles back.

FADE OUT.

THE END.

NOTES

This is a really nice scene. It's funny and vulnerable. I think it's producible as well. Of course you'd be shooting outside, so you'd have time limits on the light.