

Folie à Deux
Jacob Dawes

FADE IN.

EXT. A SMALL BODY OF WATER, SOMEWHERE IN A FOREST - MORNING

The sound of birds tweeting faintly rings out. Two birds fly off into the distance in an instant.

CUT TO:

INT. A dense wooded area, somewhere in England, on a bleak, cold day in the dead of winter - roughly late morning. The surrounding sounds of the forest act as a never-ending loop of faint white noise. The atmosphere is eerily tranquil and unnervingly calm - a real of sense of what's lurking around the corner beckons. In this location, two young men are seen perched near a small body of foul, murky water in quite a relaxed, nonchalant manor.

Two young men, it's impossible to tell how old they are or if they even remember themselves, with distinctive southern English accents and ragged, long hair with the facial hair to match - they mirror themselves, not only in appearance, but personality too. They're dressed in once ordinary clothes which are now stained and worn garments more befitting of a homeless man in the once civilised world - this, as well as they're English accents, juxtaposes any sense of what social class either of them once belonged to.

RYAN, a tall and lean young adult, whose looks, due in part to his shabby clothing and mud stained complexion, would mistake you for being beyond his years - whereas his stubborn, passive aggressive and nihilistic demeanour, coupled with his attitude towards life would remind you that he is in fact, not.

Knelt down, Ryan rummages through his backpack to pull out some loose berries and an empty plastic bottle. He throws the bottle beside him and gobbles up the berries in a primitive fashion.

HUGO, also tall and noticeably slender, is quick witted. And although he poses quite the pessimistic figure, it's perfectly balanced out by his self-aware and humoristic charm. However, there is an inkling of suspicion that this front is to drown out his softer side in order to make it through the world that has so drastically changed. He too, like Ryan, is an anomaly when it comes to deducing his age - but as seen through their means of communication, it's a safe bet to assume it's similar to Ryan's.

About ten or so metres away from him, traversing the outer edges of this small pond they've stopped at.

HUGO: *(Glancing back at Ryan)*
That's right, your Highness, you just sit there and relax.

RYAN: *(smirking with amusement)*
Wayyyyyyyyy ahead of you there, buddy. Don't mind me.

HUGO: *(Muttering under his breath)*
Ohhhh I wasn't, don't you worry 'bout that.

RYAN: *(moving towards the pond)*
I heard that, asshole.

HUGO: *(settling down, raises his eyebrows)*
That's because you were supposed to.

Ryan bites the tip off of one of his gloves and then removes the other while spitting on the ground. He begins to submerge the water bottle to fill it up.

HUGO: *(Look of disgust while chuckling)*
Jesus fucking Christ. You're not really going to drink that, are you?

RYAN
Sure am.

HUGO: *(Sarcastically)*
Because cholera died along with everything else, right?

RYAN: *(Sarcastically)*
Or, now hear me out here, maybe, just maybe, I'll boil the shitting water and there, S-A-F-E T-O D-R-I-N-K.

HUGO: *(Smugly)*
Hmmm. Last time I checked that was for ice, not murky dog shit.

RYAN
Could you just like, fuck off - for once?

HUGO: *(Grabbing a tin out the backpack. Smiles after dialogue)*
Now ... if you're going to poison yourself ... best do it the old-fashioned way.

RYAN
Can't argue with that logic.

Hugo carefully opens up the tin, revealing some loose tobacco and a few stray rolling papers. He inspects the contents and then takes a deep animated whiff - to which Ryan chuckles to himself while he watches.

HUGO: *(Looking over)*
Finer things in life, ay.

RYAN
Can't wait to see you flip out when we're dry.

HUGO: *(Starts to roll up)*
I'm banking on not making it that far.

RYAN
The eternal optimist.

HUGO
You betcha.

He rolls his lips into his mouth, noticeably concentrating on the task at hand.

RYAN: *(Watching carefully)*
With all the finesse of a bull in a china shop.

HUGO
I take it you don't want any then.

RYAN
Well, never said that did I, mate.

HUGO
Ah, then stop moaning.

RYAN
Hah ... never.

Hugo pats himself down trying to feel the outline of a lighter

RYAN: *(Reaches into the bag and throws Hugo the lighter)*
Oi, here.

He catches the lighter, rolls it in his hand before pulling it up to his mouth, where he guards the flame and lights the cigarette - taking a long, deep drag and basking in the satisfaction.

RYAN: *(Leaning over towards him with his arm Outstretched)*

My turn.

He takes one last quick drag and hands him the cigarette. Ryan wastes no time in smoking it. They pass it back and forth every few puffs and share an impromptu moment of silence.

In this time, Hugo instinctively fondles a locket and then grasps it tight in his palm - a brief moment that for him, lasts an entirety.

As the cigarette burns to an end and is flicked to one side, Ryan looks up and seemingly goes to say something, but stops himself in his tracks. After a brief moment he then speaks - snapping Hugo out from his daydream. It's in this moment Hugo is unaware he places it beside him, and not back in his pocket

RYAN

Soooo ... what now.

HUGO

Ummmm ... I guess we just keep moving.

RYAN: *(Standing up)*

Yeah. Right, fuck then, let's go.

Ryan swings the bag over his shoulder and does a 360 degree slow turn staring into the distance. In this time Hugo takes a deep breath and tilts his head towards the sky, and drags himself up.

RYAN *(CONT'D)*

East, right? Wh-where's that.

HUGO

Should've stolen a compass if you're that useless.

A Pause

HUGO: *(CONT'D)*

Right, look up at the sky ... see that?

Ryan looks up and nods to signalise he can see.

HUGO: *(Pointing)*

So, Right. You can kinda make it out that it's this way by the height of the sun.

RYAN

Man, I have not a single clue what day, let alone month it is, so this "height of the sun" nonsense is like meaningless.

HUGO

We need to make you your own Stonehenge.

RYAN

Hah, I like that. For my birthday ... if I knew when that -

In the distance a faint, yet loud crack can be heard - like a gunshot, or a tree falling perhaps? In an instant they freeze, both of their necks snapping round - like a deer in the headlights. They do or say nothing for what feels like an eternity. They then stare at each other, seemingly waiting for one another to make the first move.

RYAN: *(CONT'D)* *(eyes wide open)*

What was that?

HUGO

W-what was what?

RYAN: *(Hastily)*

You heard that, right?

HUGO: *(Unsure)*

Well, yes. But it could be anything. Stop freaking me out, it's not cool.

RYAN: *(on edge)*

What, you think I'm taking the piss or something?

Before Hugo has the chance to reply, both of them freeze again. Ryan stares at Hugo, as if to say I told you so, and ventured out slightly towards the tree line where they suspect the sound to be originating from.

HUGO: *(mumbling while gritting his teeth)*

Ohh no no no no pls no, not this pleeease.

Ryan's eyes are peeled, he's moving methodically - suspicious of all that's around him.

HUGO: *(CONT'D)* *(Talking loudly)*

It's nothing, we're just on edge, it's really nothing. We need to calm down, sort this out logically.

Hugo doesn't say anymore, as Ryan comes pacing towards with him a seemingly vicious intent. He throws Hugo down to the floor and cups his mouth.

RYAN: (*Angrily*)

What the fuck is wrong with you? Shouting, really? Are you out of your actual mind drawing attention to us like this?

He ungags Hugo and eases up on the pressure applied to keeping him pinned down. But before Hugo has a chance to offer his rebuttal, Ryan cuts in again to have the last word.

HUGO

I ... I ... just—

RYAN

NO! I don't want to hear it. You may have a death wish, but that doesn't mean I do.

There's a tense silence, Ryan's head is in his hands while Hugo comes to terms with his freak-out episode - he knew Ryan wasn't averse to having an irrational temper, but he's never seen him snap at any one individual before now. Maybe he's right, and there is someone, or something perhaps, lurking nearby.

HUGO: (*looking over to Ryan*)

You good?

RYAN: (*sounding defeated*)

Yeah. Yeah, I'm cool. We needa get the fuck outta here though, and you know where we're heading - so let's go man please let's just, let's just go.

HUGO: (*pointing out into the distance*)

Yeah, course, let's move. C'mon this way is our best bet.

After a few steps, Ryan stops while he's behind Hugo and suspiciously gazes out into the distance. It takes a few moments for Hugo to realise and turn around, by this time Ryan starts sprinting past him, pushing him in his direction in a way that bluntly tells him to run for his life. There's no time to question, no time to think, just run - and don't look back.

They're side by side, charging through the treeline - puffing and panting from the exhaustion. Running on nothing but sheer adrenaline which numbs them to the physical pain. Pure pandemonium has ensued, no awareness towards anything other

than what's directly in their periphery. They run, run, and run as if there's no end in sight.

Not even adrenaline can stop his muscles from seizing up, so Hugo collapses in a heap on the floor with his face in the dirt - panting violently like a starved dog presented with meat. He gains his bearings and lifts his head up to look around, a brief spell of relief floods his mind and soul before it dawns on him that Ryan is nowhere to be seen. He throws his body by a nearby tree, as to hide himself, and continues to catch his breath. Instinctively, he goes to grasp his locket in his palm, freaking out when he cannot feel it and seemingly refusing to believe it's gone while he pats himself down vigorously and empties all of his pockets frantically - spreading them across the ground and clutching at straws hoping it magically appears. The pain in his moans are bone chillingly raw as he accepts reality, cutting a broken figure. He peers cautiously over his small piece of cover; you can see him have an internal battle while muttering inaudible gibberish to himself, comforting perhaps to hear your chaotic thoughts out loud. Painted on his face are his two options, run, or head back - in search of Ryan or his mysterious locket is unknown. His intentions are clouded in ambiguity, as although his emotions are pouring through, his thoughts remain ominous. He stands up, takes a deep breath and lets his neck hang back - staring up into the sky.

CUTS TO BLACK.