

THE WHITE WOLF

Written by

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Based on, *The White Wolf* by Guy de Maupassant

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST LORRAINE - HILLS - DAY

A thick blanket of snow covers the land. A pack of four malnourished wolves sniff the air and land.

A gun shot echoes in the distant glade. The wolves turn their attention in that direction.

GLADE

Five men are carrying long rifles. Dead fowl and rabbit are piled up next to their horses' gear.

FRANCIS with a smoking rifle leans down to pick up a pheasant that he just shot; the blood of the bird pooling around his feet.

FRANCIS

Ha! Another good hunt! What say you gentlemen, a feast this evening?

MEN

(laughter)

Hear, hear!

JOHN approaches the pile of little animal corpses. He picks up a skinny rabbit and studies it. Then John grabs the other dead animals and ties their legs together.

JOHN

The game has suffered winter harshly. Methinks the hunt season is spent.

Francis and the men pay no heed to John and proceed to prep the saddles and mount their horses.

Mounted, Francis notices a little finch land on a frozen tree limb above him. He aims his rifle and fires, the little bird drops to his horse's feet. Francis smiles.

John pats Francis's back signaling for him to move on. Francis, John, and the men trot off to a castle whose towers rise over the frosty treetops in the distance.

INT. CASTLE D'ARVILLE - DINING HALL - DAY

A long table is set with an abundance of roasted meat and tender fruits. Five men sit happily in large wooden chairs cushioned with red velvet.

MAN 01 and MAN 02 lean in close next to Francis.

FRANCIS

My father was born while his father was following a fox. Not would my grandsire interrupt the sport. Indeed, he surely cursed the little beggar's capricious insolence in having not waited until the fox's death throws!

MAN 01

Forsooth, explanation in plenty doth reside in this story! You and your brother are born from a strong breed of huntsmen.

MAN 02

(interrupts)

Have you heard the new yarn going 'round?

FRANCIS

Nay, what tales are wagging on people's tongues these days?

MAN 02

A massive white wolf has been stalking the local villages taking livestock. It is said to think like a man and walk like one too! A woman saw it open her door and walk right into her home, snatching up her dog before she could scream for help.

FRANCIS

La vache! A wolf that walks like man!

MAN 01

'Tis true! The wolves have been terrorizing the locals and there is a large white one amongst them. I have beheld the beast myself.

FRANCIS

Ah really. It sounds to me a hunt should be mounted.

JOHN

Do not be foolish, Francis. There is no wolf as clever as a man. This is a cold winter. The wolves are just hungry; desperate the creatures are searching for sustenance, and they find it for now, close to man. That there is your tale, nothing more.

FRANCIS

Thou hast said it clear, the hunting fare is slim.

(shrugs)

And wolves should not be permitted to partake of men's livestock.

JOHN

I hear the American colonies are speaking of war.

MAN 02

War? Well, what for?

Francis looks to John with disgust. He takes out his skinning knife and begins carving on his chair arm.

FRANCIS

We should set out tomorrow when snowfall is fresh and tracks are easily seen.

JOHN

They are upset about taxation apparently. The British are trying to pay off their war debts.

Francis rolls his eyes and leans back in his chair.

FRANCIS

Irrelevant! The Americas do not concern us.

MAN 02

What of the French occupation? I invested a lot into the...

Francis stands and moves to the fireside.

By the crackling flames he holds up his skinning knife and stares into its reflective blade. Flames shimmer on its surface framing a twisted form of Francis.

There is loud LAUGHTER. Francis looks up right as the doors to the dinning hall fly open. A STABLEHAND runs in eyes wide and out of breath.

STABLEHAND

A beast! A beast in the courtyard!

JOHN

What? Calm yourself lad, and speak sense.

STABLEHAND

A colossal beast with long claws and fangs walks your grounds lord d'Arville.

(takes a breath)

It must have smelt the blood from your morning's hunt.

John turns to Francis.

Francis grabs his rifle on the fire place mantle and stuffs it with powder. He proceeds to leave the room with a wide grin on his face.

FRANCIS

The hunt comes to us!

EXT. CASTLE D'ARVILLE - COURTYARD STABLES - DAY

Half the kitchen staff and a few more workhands are circling the front of the stables. The doors have been torn off the iron hinges; wood clawed apart leaving splinters scattered on the snow.

Excitement floods Francis. He approaches the stable studying the doors in awe.

KITCHEN MAID

It was the most unholy thing I have ever seen. Its mouth salivated with thick globs of blood I tell you!

Upon approach Francis notices wolf tracks slightly covered by the snowfall trailing inside the stable.

FRANCIS  
It is no beast...  
(smiles)  
It is a wolf!

Francis peers into the dark stable. It is quiet, eerily so. He raises his rifle and proceeds to enter.

INT. STABLES - DAY

Francis checks each stall eagerly; each animal is fearful but unharmed.

Shadows move at the end of the corridor. Francis's smile dissipates, and he braces his rifle into his shoulder.

Approaching the movement, Francis only finds it to be a goat that has gotten out of its pen.

In dismay, Francis lowers his rifle turning back. He trips over something at his feet. Looking down, he is surprised to see a bloody leg belonging to a pig.

Francis hurries over to the pigpen to find a mostly eaten pig. What remains is a wash of blood on bare bone. Francis rolls back his head, frustrated.

FRANCIS  
AW!!! Not the pig! She was going to  
be a grand feast!

EXT. CASTLE D'ARVILLE - COURTYARD STABLES - DAY

John slowly approaches the stable's entrance terrified to see the doors in ruin.

JOHN  
Francis.

FRANCIS (O.S.)  
Here brother!

Francis emerges from the shadows red faced, death gripping his rifle.

FRANCIS  
The devil ate our pig! Can you  
believe that?! I had high hopes for  
that swine.

Francis turns around to the take in the devastation.

FRANCIS

Never have I seen a wolf rip wood  
like this...

John holds up a clump of white fur.

JOHN

Men, fetch the hounds! We must make  
sure this--this *wolf*... is not  
planning to stay 'round.

Francis slaps John's back with glee.

FRANCIS

Yes, indeed!

John glares at his brother as he leaves to fetch his horse  
from the stables.

EXT. FOREST LORRAINE - DAY

Around ten men make up the hunting party. Hounds BARK and  
HOWL as they pull on their leashes.

Francis and John ride on horseback, rifles prepared by their  
sides.

They cross a deep ravine and enter the darkness of the  
forest.

FRANCIS

Not far could this wolf have gone.  
The trail is still fresh and the  
hounds have the scent. We will have  
this lupine before the sun falls.

Francis looks up into the sky at the yellow sun.

LATER

The sun is low in the sky, glowing a brilliant red. Night is  
almost upon them.

John has dismounted and is kneeling studying the wolf tracks  
in the deep snow. The tracks seem to vanish ahead of him.

Men beat the brush and trees with sticks trying to scare  
anything into sight. The hounds sniff the ground pacing in  
circles, they have lost the scent.

John stands placing his hands on his hips concerned.

JOHN  
It... just vanished.

BOOM! A loud gunshot breaks the confusion. John jumps in surprise and turns. Francis is on horseback with his rifle pointing into the sky.

John SIGHS.

FRANCIS  
Hah! Got it.

JOHN  
We should head back. Night will be upon us shortly, and we have lost the wolf's trail.

Francis slowly lowers his gun turning his head to the falling sun.

FRANCIS  
Look at that red sun. With such a bloody color, the wolf will surely do mischief tonight.

JOHN  
Francis, it will soon be too dark and cold for us to track properly. It is time to head home.

Francis lowers his head and holsters his rifle. John mounts up. They turn their horses back to the castle.

As the horses take their first few steps back home, a HOWL echoes on the wind. Francis looks up and behind him.

FRANCIS  
(softly)  
It is close.

Francis spurs his horse in the direction of the howl.

JOHN  
Francis!

Francis disappears into the thick underwood. John spurs his horse to follow Francis, leaving the hunting party behind.

EXT. FOREST LORRAINE - TWISTING PATH - NIGHT

Smiling widely, Francis encourages his horse to go faster. He looks back to see his brother catching up to him.

FRANCIS  
Yes brother!

JOHN  
Francis, thou art a fool!

Francis draws his body closer to his horse's.

Up and down the horses climb rocky hills with great speed and agility.

Ahead Francis notices a WHITE WOLF sitting on the path. It darts away as Francis gets into shooting distance of it.

FRANCIS  
Ah, hahaha! The white wolf is at my mercy, John!

JOHN  
Slow down Francis! The path is becoming uneasy.

The sound of the horses' footfalls change becoming more HOLLOW as the ground shifts to ice and sharp rock.

Francis weaves his horse through narrow paths slowly gaining on the white wolf.

John slows his horse, too nervous to go faster on the rough path. He watches as Francis disappears into the forest's shadows.

A piercing HOWL breaks on the wind ahead of John.

JOHN  
Francis. Francis!

John waits a moment to no reply. John's face wrinkles. He reluctantly spurs his horse to run as fast as it can.

JOHN  
Francis, answer me!

GROVE

John enters a dark grove running at breakneck speed. Noticing a tangle of low lying limbs ahead, John pulls back on the reins.

The horse slides on the ice. John is flung forcibly from the saddle as the tree limbs hit his chest. His horse runs off.

John is lying still on the rough ground, eyes bulging and glossy. Blood pools out of the back of his head. He takes in a shallow, raspy breath.

He hears the SCRAPING of footsteps to his right. John slightly shifts his head to see the white wolf staring at him from the shadows.

He tries to move his hand toward her. He opens his mouth to speak. He subtly moves his lips with no sound attached.

#### TWISTING PATH

Francis slows his horse scanning the dark tree-line for any signs of the wolf.

FRANCIS

Ugh! Stop playing games, wolf. Show me your strength!

Francis pauses and listens to the WIND and CRACKING ice. He looks at his rifle then behind him. He stops his horse.

FRANCIS

John!

Francis turns his horse around and trots back to John's last known location.

#### GROVE

As Francis turns around a great nut tree, he stops his horse, eyes wide in terror.

In front of him, John lies dead in a pool of blood. Francis tightens his grip on the reins and stares unable to react.

Moments pass, and a wind gives Francis a push. Climbing off his horse Francis walks over to his brother's body and falls on his knees by his side.

FRANCIS

John... *John*.

He places his hand on John's chest and shakes him gently. Waiting for any sign of movement Francis rests his head on his brother's, a tear falls.

Francis's horse spooks; SNORTING and prancing. Then, there is a CRACK of a twig, and Francis snaps back into the present.

Francis looks around him noticing he is alone in the dark. He turns to the path, realizing he has lost his way. He stands, head and eyes darting around nervously.

It is eerily quiet except for his horse's heavy BREATHING. The shadows around him deepen, and trees CRACKLE in the cold. Francis begins to shiver.

Two silver eyes shine in the shadows. They lock onto Francis. Francis backs away from the eyes, tripping over John's feet and falling to the ground.

Francis looks next to him and searches for movement in John's form.

Francis hears RUSTLING. He snaps his head back to the silver eyes. They glint.

FRANCIS  
Devil! You did this!

The wolf walks out of the shadows, her white fur smooth and shimmering under the rising full moon. She is massive in form, reaching a height close to that of the horse.

The horse rears. Francis bolts up and quickly takes hold of the reins before it could run. Francis notices his rifle attached to the saddle and goes for it.

The wolf bares her teeth.

Francis swivels around firing the rifle at the wolf. The white wolf jumps away, dodging the bullet.

She lunges for Francis's gun, tearing it out of his hands and runs off.

Francis trembles with rage. He pulls John's body over his shoulders and mounts him on his horse. Once secure, Francis mounts the horse himself.

With a forceful kick, he commands the horse to run.

TWISTING PATH

Eyes fixed on the white spot ahead, Francis flies through the dark forest.

The horse gallops with its neck extended, crashing over small trees and rocks. Brambles get caught in its mane -- its head splatters with blood as low-lying branches scratch overhead harshly striking Francis's form as well.

The horse and rider burst out of the forest entering a hilly valley cradling many deep ravines.

EXT. VALLEY - NIGHT

The white wolf stops running as a ravine blocks her path. She turns then sits, waiting for Francis to catch up to her.

Francis skids his horse to a stop creating a whirlpool of powdery snow behind him. The horse's form shakes in exhaustion.

Francis turns to the wolf in front of him, eyes wide in madness. He dismounts keeping his eyes lock on the white wolf. The wolf sits patiently waiting.

Francis turns back to his horse. He lifts John off the saddle resting his form up against a boulder. He kneels down to look John in the face.

John's face is but a mass of clumped blood and hair.

FRANCIS

Look, John! Look here!

Francis gently turns his brother's head so he could observe the wolf. Then with lightning speed, Francis takes out his skinning knife and charges the white wolf.

The wolf jumps back to avoid the first few swings, sidling the ravine.

Breathing heavily, Francis notices the wolf is cornered and stretches out to prepare a powerful blow.

Snarling, the white wolf jumps toward Francis with sharp claws extended. She aims for his vitals.

Francis drops his knife to grab the wolf's throat. The wolf flails as Francis squeezes her windpipe.

Francis takes a step forward to stabilize himself from the wolf's convulsions. This causes the snow to slide, and the ground breaks from under him and the wolf.

Francis lets go of the wolf, managing to take hold of a root before completely falling to unknown danger. The wolf HOWLS as she falls into darkness.

Wind tugs Francis's clothing as he pulls himself up.

Looking back into the deep gully, he sees nothing but darkness. He kicks a few pebbles and waits for them to hit the bottom.

A few moments pass before he hears the pebbles hit the ground; he smiles. Francis runs back to his brother.

FRANCIS

Look, John! Look!

Francis hooks his arms under John's and drags him to the ravine. He props John up so he may peer into the darkness below him.

FRANCIS

Here, here, my little John, here it is! Hahaha! It fell to its death! Hahaha! See look down there!

After a moment of staring into darkness, Francis drags his brother back to the horse. He places his brother on the horse, then himself.

Francis rides off crying in crazed LAUGHTER.

As the brothers disappear into the night, the ravine in which the white wolf fell stirs.

A pack of four skinny wolves gather around the edges of the ravine. They HOWL. There is a moment of stillness.

Within the ravine, a powerful HOWL answers back.

**THE END**