

A GIFT FOR THE OLD PARK RANGER

by

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EXT. - PATH ALONG A CREEK IN A MOUNTAIN PARK - DAY

A pathway in a park. One side is dense forest. On the other side a short slope goes down to a small creek. More forests and mountains are in the distance. The path disappears around bends in the path in both directions.

PETER, a young man in his 20's walks into view around a bend in the path. As he walks forward he glances back to see GEORGE, an old man in his 80's come into view on the path.

Peter stops at a wider part of the path. While he waits for George, he looks out at the creek, forest, and mountains. George joins him and gazes out at the view. He smiles broadly.

GEORGE

I remember the very first time I
stopped here to admire the view.

George turns to Peter and touches him on the shoulder.

GEORGE

I was a real young fella then.
Younger than you are now.
(pause)
Thank you.

Peter smiles.

PETER

I couldn't say no to you on your
birthday Grandpa George.

George looks out at the view again.

GEORGE

(whispering)
Beautiful, Beautiful.

PETER

Are you ready to go on. We don't
want to be out too late.

George nods and the two men turn to continue down the path.

After only a few steps, George trips over a tree root in the path. Peter tries to keep George from falling, but he ends up falling himself. The two men land heavily on the ground.

Peter recovers quickly and stands up, but George lies unmoving on the ground. Peter kneels over him.

PETER
Grandpa George! Grandpa George! Are
you hurt?

George's eyelids flutter open and he looks up at Peter.

GEORGE
Peter. Are you OK?

PETER
I'm OK, but I'm worried about you.

GEORGE
Oh? Me? I'm fine. Just give me a
hand getting up.

Peter tries to help George get up, but George is too weak to help, and grimaces in pain. Peter gives up and gently lays George back down. George rests for a bit, then looks at Peter.

GEORGE
I'm afraid something is broken.
You'll need to go for help.

PETER
I can't just leave you here.

GEORGE
We don't have a choice. You'll have
to go. There is a ranger station by
the trail head. They're a good
couple of guys you can rely on.
(pause)
I trained them myself.

PETER
Are you sure you'll be all right?

GEORGE
Don't worry about me. I've spent
most of my life in this park. There
is nothing to fear.

PETER
OK.

Peter stands up and backs away down the path. He starts to turn away.

GEORGE
(shouting)
Don't tell your mother about this.

Peter nods and walks away. George smiles at him until Peter is out of sight, George lets the smile fade and he closes his eyes.

EXT. - PATH ALONG A CREEK IN A MOUNTAIN PARK - DAY

Several hours have gone by. It is much hotter as the sun beats down. George lies inert on the path. His eyes are closed and his mouth hangs open. His breaths are fitful.

The sound of quiet footsteps become noticeable. Moments later a huge grizzly bear comes from around the bend. It looks gaunt for the time of year.

The bear stops short of George and studies him for a long time before it moves closer. It sniffs around George's body.

The bear prods George with its nose. George stirs slightly. The bear prods him again, and George opens his eyes to see the bear's face inches from his own.

GEORGE

Well, old fella, you've come for me
now have you.

George gives a short laugh, then closes his eyes and goes limp.

The bear prods George again, but George does not react.

After a few moments, the bear turns, walks to the edge of the path, and down the small slope to the creek. The bear fills its mouth with water from the creek and returns to George's side. It pours the water from its mouth onto George's face and into his mouth.

George sputters and opens his eyes. He seems more alive. He stares at the bear.

PETER

(off screen, shouting,
and in the distance)
Grandpa George.

The bear and George both look down the path in the direction of the shout. Then they look at each other.

GEORGE

(quietly)
You'd better go.

The bear turns and moves toward the tree line by the side of the path.

GEORGE

Thank you.

The bear glances back, then vanishes into the woods.

Moments later, Peter comes into view. A male park ranger and a female park ranger join him. They carry a stretcher.

PETER

How are you?

GEORGE

Fine, I told you it would be OK.

The park rangers set up the stretcher, transfer George on to it, and then they start back down the path.