

"RANGER RIDE ALONG"

By

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Visual Story
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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST SIDE RIVER. DAY.

Hill scene, focused on small plant growing overlooking river next to forest. Snow can be seen melting.

RANGER (VOICE OVER)

Through every season...

An elderly bear walks from the forest with a cub behind her, the cub with a distinct spot over her snout (Named Snout). The pair drink from the river.

RANGER (CONT.)

And over many years...

FADE TO:

Same scene, Spring now, lots of small flowers are blooming. Foreground plant has grown slightly; Snout is bigger and alone now at a different spot at the shore.

RANGER (CONT.)

One thing has remained the same...

FADE TO:

Same scene, Summer now, foreground plant has grown more, Snout is an adult and can be seen wading in river catching salmon.

RANGER (CONT.)

I know you think it's the parks...

FADE TO:

Same scene, Winter now, snow hides grass, Snout is nowhere to be seen. Foreground plant is fully grown. A boot steps into frame next to it. Camera pans up to reveal a ranger with a bag of fertilizer and a notebook.

RANGER (OUT LOUD)

But it's actually just us.

CUT TO BLACK. TITLE SCREEN.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. RANGER STATION. DAY.

Wall with hooks and ranger hats hung up, a clock and a whiteboard with 'Ranger responsibilities' written on it, long list that is unreadable to viewer. A rifle sits in a locked box; the gun is clean and well maintained.

RANGER (VOICE OVER)

As long as I can remember I wanted to be a park ranger.

Ranger walks in frame and takes a hat, putting it on as they open the door and take a step outside.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. RANGER STATION DECK OVERLOOKING PARKING LOT. DAY.

Ranger on deck of station overlooking carpark surrounded by forest, families getting out of cars with picnic baskets, couples in hiking gear...

RANGER (CONT.)

I always loved visiting the parks with my family, and now I love seeing families visit my park!

Notification sound. Ranger pulls out phone. Zoom in on phone, background not visible. Phone shows news broadcast.

RANGER (CONT.)

That was until the budget cuts.

Politician babbles with graph behind him going up and with a sudden drop. The text reads "Parks funding cut dramatically as Ranger's actually do nothing!"

RANGER (CONT.)

I don't think they realize how much we do.

Phone put down. Parking lot is now empty; trash littered on ground and bins are full. Toilet in corner of lot has closed permanently sign over it. Fences have fallen over; many plants have died or overgrown. Ranger sighs, turns around and walks back into station. Snout can be seen

walking through parking lot, sniffing trash and pushing it around.

RANGER (CONT.)

We maintained the endangered plants, looked after their campgrounds, made sure the hikers were safe by walking along the trails, making sure everyone was enjoying the park. Now?

INT. RANGER STATION. SUNSET.

Wall with hooks empty now except for the Ranger's hat as he takes it off and hangs it up, clock and a whiteboard with 'Ranger responsibilities' written on it, "keep squatters out" is all that is written now. Ranger facing the wall, shoulders dropped. The rifle in the box is now dirty, has scratch marks and the glass box is cracked.

RANGER (CONT.)

We make sure they stay out.

Ranger turns around, lost look on face.

FADE TO:

EXT. FOREST

Ranger in buggy driving along trail. Ranger looks upset as he has the rifle strapped to his back. Some trees have scratch marks; the plants are dying.

RANGER (CONT.)

Now instead of walking the trails and tending to the plants I used to, greeting the hikers that frequented and pointing out the birds in the trees to the curious kids who were visiting, I drive through the park, listening for people who are here to ask them to leave because the animals don't understand to leave humans alone anymore.

Loud crack sound is heard. Buggy stops, the Ranger looks down a trail and turns down it, disappearing into the trees.

CUT TO

Run down campsite, woman with blue bow (Peri), man with red hat (Marc) and a child with logo shirt (Fern) are seen in the site. Peri is rummaging through an esky, Marc is fighting with a tent, Fern is using a stick to poke at the sand, drawing pictures. Marc mutters to himself angrily as Peri rolls her eyes at him. Buggy engine can be heard getting closer.

MARC

What the hell?

Buggy arrives and stops, Ranger steps out and looks at the squatters, confused and disappointed.

RANGER

I'm sorry guys, this campsite isn't open, you can't stay here anymore.

MARC

You don't own the park, we can camp where we want.

RANGER

The animals in the area are dangerous; this is for safety more than anything.

FERN

I can hear-

PERI

What sort of animals?

MARC (SCOFFING)

He's trying to scare you. Just keep getting lunch ready.

RANGER

Sir, the park has been closed for over a year, the bears-

MARC

Yeah whatever, funding issues, right?

FERN

But I still hear a-

PERI

Not now Fern!

We slow down as the Ranger tries to talk to Marc who gets angrier, Peri looks between them, and Fern turns to the forest. Audio from the scene fades out.

RANGER (VOICE OVER)

I don't think anyone really appreciated the rangers until we were the endangered species.

Suddenly Snout jumps out of the forest line and tackles Fern. The Ranger swings his rifle from his back and takes aim. Snout releases Fern's arm to raise her head and roar, Ranger shoots her twice in the neck. Snout jumps back and the Ranger shoots again. Marc begins yelling at the ranger, Peri falls to the ground covering her ears. Snout falls.

We go back to normal speed and Ranger runs to Fern, tying a tourniquet on their arm using his tie. Marc races over, yelling at the Ranger, Peri gets up and begins yelling at Marc, who turns his attention to Peri. Fern looks up at the ranger. Scene audio fades back in, arguing muffled.

FERN

Am I going to be okay, Mr Ranger?

RANGER

If my tie holds and my buggy gets us to the station quick enough so the ambulance can get here.

FERN

What about the bear?

The two look over at Snout, lying dead in the dirt. A timid roar is heard from the tree line as a cub walks out, a birthmark over its eye. The cub looks at Snout and walks

over sniffing her before nudging her and leaning up against her. The cub sits down and lets out a forlorn roar.

RANGER

I don't think they'll be okay kid.

FADE OUT:

THE END