

GATOR BUTCHERING FOR BEGINNERS

Written by

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Based on the short story by Kristen Arnett

Address  
Phone Number

INT. FAMILY GARAGE - DAY

A sparse garage with a large freezer chest. Butcher knives are laid carefully on a workbench.

STEPHAN (mid-40s, weathered hands, grim expression) stands over a large object, possibly an animal. QUINN (13, a gangly tomboy, Stephan's daughter) watches him attentively.

STEPHAN  
Start with the head.

A butcher knife SLAMS down. The alligator's head is severed from its body. Neither Dad nor daughter blink.

TITLE CARD.

STEPHAN (V.O.)  
It's easy enough to slip the  
skin...

INTERCUT: John Doe's house/Family Garage

INT. JOHN DOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A work light illuminates. We see skin slowly peeled back. The ripe flesh underneath. It's difficult to tell if it's a person or animal. But we recognize the calloused, weathered hands of Dad.

INT. FAMILY GARAGE - DAY (PRESENT)

Dad slices along the flesh of the alligator. Daughter slowly creeps closer, watching over Dad's arm. She is mesmerized.

They stand side-by-side, and look eerily similar.

STEPHAN  
Wedge your knife below the bumpy  
ride of spine to separate cartilage  
from fat; loosen tendon from --

QUINN  
Pink, sticky, meat

Stephan hands the knife to Quinn. He puts his hand over hers and guides her to wedge the knife under the spine.

STEPHAN  
Flay everything open.

INT. JOHN DOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Blobs of flesh, skin, and blood. It looks too large and complex to be an animal.

INT. FAMILY GARAGE - DAY (PRESENT)

DAUGHTER  
Pry free the heart.

Quinn stands over the alligator. She grips the heart firmly.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. JOHN DOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Stephan pries the heart out of John Doe. He is aggressive, eyes wild. He grunts like an animal.

INT. FAMILY GARAGE - DAY (PRESENT)

DAD  
*It takes some nerve.*

Quinn's hands are bloody.

INT. JOHN DOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

DAD (V.O.)  
What I mean is, it'll hurt.

He smiles manically.

INT. FAMILY GARAGE - DAY (PRESENT)

DAD  
But you can get what you crave --

We see the alligator's teeth, all 80 of them.

INT. JOHN DOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

We see John Doe's teeth. Stephan pulls them out with pliers. Stephan's teeth clenched as he breaths deeply.

DAD (V.O.)  
If you want it badly enough.

He reaches in and YANKS John's heart out. It fits perfectly in the palm of his hand. A satisfied grin.

INT. FAMILY GARAGE - DAY (PRESENT)

Daughter pulls out the alligator heart. Blood SPURTS on Dad. He spits out the side of his mouth, wipes his face. He sees the blood on his hand and leaves.

A faucet runs in the distance.

Daughter picks up the alligator heart. We slowly push in on the freezer chest. Daughter opens it -- inside is John Doe. Or what's left of him. She stares at him.

Dad's FOOTSTEPS approach.

A beat. The Daughter's eyes slowly meet John Doe's. They never waver as she carefully closes the chest.

THE END.