

DESCENT

By Derek Saul

INT. SMALL PROPELLER PLANE (IN MID-FLIGHT) - DAY

LUKAS suddenly BOLTS AWAKE. Panicked. Scared. Like an animal lost in the woods.

He's crumpled in a corner of the plane, darting his eyes madly about. Perplexed. Trying to make sense of where he is. The sound of the plane's single ENGINE is churning brutishly in his ears.

He looks down at himself, taking note of his attire. He's dressed in BLACK MILITARY FATIGUES of some kind. A large BACKPACK is strapped to his shoulders. An assortment of CABLES, WIRES, and CORDS hang from several pouches in his clothes.

Then, he hears it -- WIND. Feels the strong gusts whipping his jet-black hair around. His eyes scan the plane for the source of the wind, when something offscreen makes his eyes go wide --

The side door is WIDE OPEN. PUFFS OF CLOUD occasionally brush against the door.

GOGGLES (O.C.)

Rise and shine, pal...

His vision still fuzzy, Lukas looks up.

A MAN is standing in front of him, wearing similar black fatigues and thick GOGGLES on his eyes.

GOGGLES

Time to meet your maker.

He leans over and GRABS Lukas by the shirtfront, hoisting him up from the floor.

LUKAS

(over the engine noise)

Where am I?

Goggles laughs, pats Lukas on the back.

GOGGLES

Geez, that's a good one. Haven't heard that one in a while.

Goggles begins ushering Lukas toward the OPEN DOOR. His pace is hurried and frantic.

GOGGLES
Never thought you'd make it this far, did you.

LUKAS
What the hell am I doing in this plane?

GOGGLES
What are any of us doing here?
We're checking our pulse. Shoving glass underneath our nostrils to see if we'll fog it up.

Lukas is completely lost.

Goggles leans into Lukas' ear.

GOGGLES
"Dust you are, and to dust you will return."

Goggles gives Lukas one final grin, then --

He PUSHES LUKAS OUT of the plane.

EXT. PLANE - SKY

Lukas FALLS out of the side door, SCREAMING.

INT. PLANE

Goggles stands at the door, watching Lukas drop. He HOWLS into the air, charged.

GOGGLES
KISS THE SKY, BIRDMAN!! HA HA!!

EXT. SKY

Lukas is falling fast. Behind him, the plane is getting smaller and smaller, quickly becoming another generic dot in the wild blue yonder.

WIND is whipping past him, his hair flipping wildly, the skin on his face stretching back, being battered by the unstoppable rush of air.

The GROUND is fast approaching, becoming more and more visible with every passing second.

Lukas' breaths are coming in fast and light. He is absolutely shitting bricks.

LUKAS
(suddenly remembering)
P-p-para... parachute...! Where's
the goddamn parachute!

His hands begin fumbling around his body, patting the pouches on his jacket, searching for something -- ANYTHING. His hand grabs onto a CORD on his chest. He doesn't know one cord from the next, but he's desperate. He PULLS on it --

His BACKPACK suddenly BLOWS OPEN, yards of heavy material unspooling itself and rising above him. The PARACHUTE flips open in all its majestic splendor. Lukas is suddenly YANKED UP into the air, a sudden BARRAGE of air hitting the chute like a battering ram.

He did it. Lukas YELLS euphorically into the pale blue sky.

LUKAS
WOOOOOOOOHOOOOOOOO!!!

But as quickly as his jubilation comes, it goes. Slowly his wide grin begins to fade. Something isn't right. He looks down --

The earth is still rising toward him at a numbing velocity. His descent hasn't slowed down all that much, despite the parachute.

Lukas' panic begins anew once again. He latches onto the parachute cables, wriggling around helplessly.

Suddenly, it dawns on him. Slowly he shifts his gaze up toward the parachute and sees --

A TWO-METER-LONG GASH running along the top of the chute, inhaling air like the mouth of God.

No one will hear him, but he doesn't care. He lets loose anyway.

LUKAS
YOU BASTARDS! YOU GAVE ME A

DEFECTIVE PARACHUTE!

But he knows it's futile, and there's not much left to do but ride it out and hope for the best. He glances down quickly again at --

THE GROUND

It's getting closer... closer... closer...

Lukas shuts his eyes tightly --

POW! He SLAMS into the earth like a meteor, ROLLING end over end for several yards, kicking up a torrent of DUST, before the parachute finally swarms over him, spreading like tentacles and gently blanketing him -- a fatal impact that would have surely broken every bone in a person's body and crushed his skull.

The parachute settles. The dust settles. And then...

Silence.

Nothing but a pale wind HOWLING gently over the dunes, stretching as far back as the eye can see.

UNDERNEATH THE PARACHUTE

Quiet. Pitch BLACK darkness.

Lukas lies still beneath the mounds of material, unsure whether he's alive or dead.

Suddenly, he HEARS movement. RUSTLING. A VOICE...

The thick, immense parachute is abruptly YANKED AWAY, and his vision is brutally exposed to overwhelmingly bright SUNLIGHT.

Lukas immediately throws an arm over his eyes, shielding himself from the blinding rays, avoiding the glare as if he were looking upon the sun with virgin eyes.

CHIN SCAR (O.C.)

Now what's this, boy...

A greasy-looking guy with a distinct SCAR on his CHIN hovers over Lukas, trying to slap Lukas' arm away from his eyes.

CHIN SCAR

That ain't no way to greet a new day. Look into the eye of God...

He GRIPS Lukas by the chin, squeezing his cheeks together tightly, forcing him to look at the sun.

Lukas responds by COUGHING up a cloud of dust.

CHIN SCAR

(laughs)

Yeah, that's it. Taste that earth,
feel that dust in your lungs...

LUKAS

(coughing)

Wh-what... is... th-this...

(coughs again)

Wh-where... am I...?

CHIN SCAR

(as if it's obvious)

Ha! Where are ya? Look around'ya!

He steps aside and waves his arm, displaying the open terrain for Lukas to see.

CHIN SCAR

You're home, kid.

(grins)

Welcome back to Earth.