

The Carp (La Carpe)

France, 2002

Short Film, 13'30 minutes, filmed on 35mm in Dolby Surround Sound

Cast:

Alexandra Dahlström as Beatrice

Stephane Chivot as Jean (Beatrice's Brother)

Joseph Dahan as Jean's Friend

Antoine Chatalau as Pierre (Beatrice's Boyfriend)

Written and Directed by

Alanté Alfandari

Director of Photography

Michel Laferrerie

Produced by

Antoine Simkine – Les Films D'Antoine

ACT I, SCENE I

In a beautiful apartment and looking onto a table, decorated and prepared for a luxury dinner. Jean, the brother, is talking with someone on the phone. He's not in sight of the camera.

Jean: I know... I know what we'll make next time. A three in one! Yes, wait! Listen to me...

Jean's face is now visible.

Jean: A pigeon stuffed in a rooster... stuffed in a goose!

Jean is a handsome guy with short brown hair which is half blonde. He is wearing a blue shirt and black trousers.

Jean: No, it's out of the question to do it without nettles. I don't know where to find them! Look in a park!

The doorbell rings.

Jean: Hurry up! The others are already here!

He goes to answer the door. A picture stands on a small table next to the door. The photo shows a young girl (maybe 7 or 8-years old) and an older brother (around 12-years-old) with their mother somewhere in front of a house. The mother holds a rabbit in her arms, while the boy has a really weird and spooky expression on his face. Creepy music plays in the background.

Jean: Little sis!

Jean's Friend: We've been waiting for an hour!

Jean (to Beatrice): I was busy with your boyfriend. He's nice, but lousy at finding nettles.

ACT I, SCENE II

A carp is swimming in a bathtub. Beatrice, her brother and Jean's friend are standing around it taking photos, smiling and drinking wine.

Jean's Friend: Where is it from?

Jean: Where do you think? The fish market!

Jean's Friend: Did you add salt?

Jean: No, it's a fresh water fish.

Beatrice: They are easy fish. They live anywhere and for a long time. In China some carps live 100 years.

ACT I, SCENE III

In the kitchen. All kinds of vegetables and lemons are on the table, ready for making a fine dinner.

Jean's Friend: You know what your brother and your boyfriend did last time?

Beatrice is sitting at a table cutting carrots for cooking and as a snack.

Jean's Friend: They screwed up the sauce!

Jean: Hey!

Beatrice: It's normal. I wasn't here.

Jean: That's all the past. It won't happen again.

He proposes a toast.

Jean: To our gastronomic encounters!

ACT II, SCENE I

The camera pans down a table, showing a lot of photos of all kinds of dishes.

Beatrice: You really ate pig ears?

Jean: Yeah!

A mobile phone rings.

Beatrice stands up and goes to her phone. Her brother and his friend are looking at one particular photo.

Jean: It's your boyfriend. He better have the nettles!

Beatrice is now at the front door. She is reaching inside her jacket and pulls out her phone.

Beatrice: Pierre?

Pierre (on the phone): I have the nettles.

Beatrice finds some photos inside another jacket and stares at them.

Pierre: Can you hear me? Hello?! Can you hear me?

Beatrice interrupts the phone call, still holding the photo in her hands and takes all the pictures out of the jacket. She stares at the five photos. They show a cooked rabbit in a bowl with beans. Very cruel.

ACT II, SCENE II

FLASHBACK (Creepy music plays)

A garden. A rabbit is running through the grass. A girl runs behind the rabbit and plays with it. Laughter. Suddenly, the mother steps towards the rabbit and grabs it. In the other hand she holds a long sharp knife. The world is whirling and spinning around, then goes upside down and everything turns red.

ACT II, SCENE III

Back at the apartment. Beatrice is in the bathroom sitting on the edge of the bathtub. She looks into the tub where the carp is still swimming. She touches the fish, trying to play with it. The carp swims around her feet.

ACT III, SCENE I

A sink full of mussels. Blood is dripping down.

Jean's Friend: Explain to me how you cut yourself cleaning mussels. Oysters maybe...

Jean: Stop, stop!

Jean's Friend: Let me see.

Jean: Stop! Beatrice. What is she doing?

Jean's Friend: And Pierre? Are we going to eat this carp?

ACT III, SCENE II

Beatrice comes out of the bathroom holding the carp in her hands, walking straight ahead to the kitchen but stops in the living room.

Jean: No, not now! You're crazy!

Beatrice looks on very silently and doesn't seem to care. Jean's friend and her brother fondle the carp now as well.

Jean: Gentle, gentle.

Jean and his friend are trying to take over the fish.

Jean's Friend: Be careful. Take it like this.

Jean: Gentle, it's fragile. Underneath...

Jean's Friend: Careful.

Jean: Not like this.

The carp starts to escape their hands. At the same time the doorbell rings.

Jean: Wait...

Too late! The fish slips through their fingers and escapes. It lands on the ground but then disappears. Everyone looks around for the fish.

Jean (running to the door): Shit. Hurry up or it will die.

Beatrice sits at the table and is grabbing at something beneath it.

Pierre (At the door): I thought public parks were well kept but you're right. There are weeds.

Jean's friend is ducking under the table opposite Beatrice and takes photos. It looks from the outside as though he would lick her.

Pierre (now in the apartment, near the table): What's going on?

Jean: I don't know. Ask your girlfriend. She dropped the carp on the floor.

Jean's Friend: It's not here. (Coming up from under the table)

Pierre gives Beatrice a little yellow flower.

Beatrice: No more carp.

She stands up and walks away. Pierre looks on after her. Jean is looking under the couch.

Jean: Stop messing around now. Somebody tell me where the carp is!

ACT III, SCENE III

In the kitchen. Beatrice tries to chop some herbs. Her brother comes in very angry.

Jean: Not like that. Give it to me.

He takes the cutting machine and stuffs the herbs inside.

Jean: What's wrong?

Beatrice: I know what you ate the last time.

FLASHBACK

Everything looks reddish. A rabbit running through the grass.

Back to the kitchen.

Jean: What?

His friend and Pierre are coming into the kitchen.

Jean's Friend: The carp's really gone!

FLASHBACK

Everything looks reddish. A rabbit running through the grass.

Back to the kitchen.

The kitchen machine turns on and suddenly the lights go out and the apartment is covered in darkness.

ACT IV, SCENE I

In front of the circuit breakers. Pierre, Jean and his friend are whispering and looking at the circuit breakers with their flashlights.

Pierre: We really shouldn't have eaten the rabbit.

Jean: Ok, fine.

Beatrice stands in the doorway.

Jean (loud): Ok, just because yours was eaten... doesn't mean we can't eat rabbits anymore.

Beatrice: You don't understand.

Jean: You weren't here the other night.

Beatrice: If I knew, maybe I would have come.

Jean: And then what? You'd have eaten Peter Rabbit?

Beatrice: Maybe.

Jean's Friend: And killed it?

Pierre: Rabbits are eaten everywhere.

The carp makes a noise. Everyone looks into the apartment.

Beatrice: What was that? Did you hear that?

Pierre: What's going on?

Jean's Friend: I don't know.

They hear loud noises.

Jean: Pssss....

Jean is wandering through the apartment, looking with the flashlight beneath the furniture. He looks under an armchair. Nothing. Suddenly a pale face appears on the other side of the chair glowing in the darkness. Beatrice. Jean is scared at first. All of the guys now have flashlights and are looking for the fish. The noises seem to be coming from every corner of the apartment. They are getting more and more frightened.

Suddenly, a loud and sharp scream disturbs the silence. Beatrice has jumped on the couch.

Pierre: Are you ok?

Beatrice: It was over there! Over there I said!

Jean's Friend: What was it?

Jean sets the beam of his flashlight on a painting on the wall next to Beatrice. A cruel and disgusting painting of a dead and ripped up rooster upside down.

ACT IV, SCENE II

Back at the circuit breakers.

Jean is hammering on the circuit breakers. Electric sparks are coming out of the plugs in the apartment.

Jean: I can't believe that.

Beatrice looks up to a chandelier. A big water drop lands on her face. She smiles.

ACT IV, SCENE III

Everyone is standing around fishbowl with a goldfish. The flashlights are illuminating their faces and getting magnified by the glass.

Beatrice: Do you think it's possible that the carp disappeared?

Jean: Apparently, it just happened.

Beatrice: It just happened and that's it?

Jean: Should we register a complaint?

Beatrice: I'm just wondering how it's possible. We looked everywhere.

Pierre: We looked for it, but I never saw your carp.

Jean's Friend: I not only saw it, I touched the bitch. Smell!

Beatrice: And the sounds? How do you explain the sounds?

Jean: I don't know. I'm not sure I heard anything. But the circuit breakers... that worries me.

Beatrice: In any case, I didn't really want to eat it.

Jean: You're a real pain in the ass! You always have been one. This is your fault. And you asshole, you let her find the rabbit photos.

Pierre: A rabbit and a fish quarrel!

Jean: Stop with your cheap poetry! You really piss me off! You've ruined my apartment.

Pierre: Should we go?

Jean: Yeah! Get out! I'll stay all alone in the dark. Fuck you all. Go!

Jean's Friend: I'm getting some couscous. You are a bunch of idiots.

Jean: (Grabs his friend on the neck like a rabbit): You will clean up the mess and you will find that fucking carp!

Jean, his friend and Pierre are whirling around almost frightening each other. The fishbowl falls down and shatters in a thousand pieces. The three guys are staring at the goldfish which is flapping on the ground making noises like the carp. Then it's dead. Then again – the noises from the carp can be heard. They're getting louder and louder.

Jean: Come on, let's forget this. Let's go out, it's my treat.

Jean's Friend: Are you sure?

Jean: Yes.

Pierre: You guys never let me pay...

They are all going down the stairs.

Beatrice: My purse! I forgot my purse! It has everything... my keys!

Pierre: Come to my house.

Beatrice: No!

Jean: Where is your purse?

Beatrice: In the foyer or the kitchen. I don't know.

Pierre: I'm going back in.

They all go upstairs again. All except Beatrice. She carefully looks on after the guys to make sure they are all in the apartment. The door is open and the keys are in the lock. Beatrice goes to the door and

locks it. She takes her purse from under her jacket, opens it, and takes out several photos and slides them underneath the door into the apartment. The photos are showing the cooked rabbit from last time.

Beatrice goes down the stairs. The carp makes loud noises and the guys are heard screaming for their lives.

END

Source: <http://alexandra-dahlstrom.com> (Jenny)