

ANNUKKA KIURU:
Runaways (Short film, 15 min.)

1. TENT GROUPS - dream
INT, CLASSROOM, DAY
JESSE, CHILDREN, TEACHER

Written on the blackboard: "CAMP SCHOOL TENT TEAMS". The teacher's hand writes under it "BOYS 1". (Blackboard texts to be subtitled in other countries.)

Eemeli:
Aki.

The teacher writes Aki's name on the blackboard; Aki's face is shown. Eemeli lifts the next piece of paper.

Eemeli:
Tino.

Tino:
Yes!

Eemeli:
Tomi.

Aki and Tino look at each other. Their expressions show that they feel honoured. Aki and Tino turn and look at Tomi, who looks indifferent and self-assured. The teacher writes their names on the blackboard. Eemeli lifts the fourth piece of paper.

Eemeli:
Jesse.

Jesse is startled. Tomi turns to look at Jesse with a devilish smile. The image turns into nightmare-like, distorting and slowing down. Tomi begins to make faces at Jesse, children laugh, the sound turns strangely thick, etc.

2. FEAR
INT, TENT,
JESSE

Jesse opens his eyes. Jesse's distress grows as the shadows and sounds increase. He listens to rustle, whispers, sighs and the sound of breaking twigs. Paralyzed with fear he stares at shadows flicking on the tent walls. The tent sways in a frightful manner; someone is moving outside. He bounces up in fear.

3. WHO IS BREAKING THE TWIGS
EXT, FOREST, MORNING
JOEL

In the forest, behind the tents we see a moving figure dressed in black. Dry fallen twigs break under its steps. There's something frightful in the figure. It is moving close to the outermost tent. As it hears a cry from the tent, the figure leaves.

4. SHAME -
EXT, CAMPSITE, MORNING.
JESSE, CHILDREN, TEACHER

Jesse rushes out of the tent in his mere underpants with a teddy bear in his hand, horror-stricken. Jesse runs to the covered breakfast table and tries to explain something, pointing at the forest.

Jesse:
There's someone moving out there! I heard strange voices!

The children and the teacher laugh. Tomi points at the teddy bear in Jesse's hand, and the boys are amused. Jesse is embarrassed. (Here you can use "extended time"; children's bursts of laughter, Jesse's looks, more children, Tomi pointing at the teddy bear, Jesse's attempts to hide the teddy, feeling ashamed.)

5a). QUARREL
EXT, CAMPSITE, EARLY EVENING
JESSE, CHILDREN, TEACHER, SUPERVISORS -

The children return from an excursion into the forest carrying their rucksacks. Tomi, Aki and Tino reach the tent before Jesse. They begin to whisper and write on a piece of paper the word "LOSER". Jesse arrives, weary, takes off his rucksack and sits down to rest outside the tent. He takes a bottle of soft drink out of his rucksack and takes a gulp. The teacher passes and shouts.

Teacher:
And then to the sauna!

Aki and Tino fetch their sauna things from the tent. Going to the tent, Tomi attaches the piece of paper on Jesse's back in passing. Tomi pretends to stumble and leans on Jesse. The boys giggle. Jesse turns but does not realize what Tomi did and why the boys are laughing. He does not like their tone. He puts the bottle back into his rucksack and stands up to fetch his things from the tent. Tomi comes out with his sauna things under his arm; he passes Jesse; the piece of paper is visible on Jesse's back. The boys giggle. Tomi is up to some more mischief; he discovers the teddy bear in Jesse's open rucksack. He pretends to be Jesse in the morning with the teddy in his hand. He pretends to cry like a baby, and the boys laugh. Jesse comes out of the tent and gets angry.

Jesse:
Give it to me!

Tomi:
I won't.

Jesse:
I bet you will!

Jesse tries to get the teddy, Tomi dodges him. Jesse falls down in trying to get the teddy. Tomi mocks at him.

Tomi:
Lälläl-läl-läl lää, lää....!

Tomi gets a good head start and runs away while Jesse scrambles to his feet. Jesse runs after Tomi.

5b)

They end up on a jetty. Tomi laughs and clowns, Tino and Aki have got closer to the shore to observe the situation, laughing. Toni walks backwards on the jetty, swinging the teddy. Jesse stares at him angrily. He snatches the teddy from Tomi. Tomi tries to get it back. Jesse turns violently and pushes Tomi to the water. He leaves quickly, angry still. He sees Aki and Tino running into the beach, calling Tomi.

Aki:
Tomi!!

Jesse glances over his shoulder to the shore - gets a fright - and runs away. He passes one of the children, who is surprised to see Jesse running into the forest with his teddy bear.

6. JOEL SEES POLICE OFFICERS
EXT, ROAD, EARLY EVENING
JOEL, POLICE OFFICERS

Joel, a young man dressed in black is a frightening sight. He's the very figure who was seen earlier in the forest, and he's now walking with a rucksack on his shoulders. He glances back once in a while. When a car is heard approaching, Joel jumps to the roadside and hides behind a tree. A police car passes. Joel glances after the car and walks on to the forest.

7. JESSE'S FLIGHT
EXT, ROAD, EARLY EVENING
JESSE, POLICE OFFICERS

Jesse runs along the roadside. He glances back; luckily no one is following him. He begins to slow down. Should he go back? He hears a car approaching. When he sees it's a police car, Jesse jumps to the ditch and covers his head with his hands. The car rolls slowly past to the opposite direction, towards the camping site. Jesse shudders at his mental image.

8. JESSES MENTAL IMAGE
EXT. JETTY, DAY
TOMI, TEACHER, CHILDREN

In Jesse's mental image, Tomi falls from the jetty. Then he lies lifeless on the jetty with shocked children around, while the teacher tries to resuscitate him, and the sound of an ambulance is approaching.

9a). JESSE GETS LOST
EXT, FOREST, EARLY EVENING
JESSE, JOEL

Another car is heard approaching. Jesse wakes up to reality and runs away to the forest; it's the same place where Joel went before him. Jesse mooches around in the forest, stumbling. He sits down. He thinks. The image of a drowned Tomi does not leave him alone. The image grows more real; Jesse sees Tomi's dead face. He looks back to where he came from. He's not sure where he came from, but he continues trudging. His head is in sweat. He smells smoke. Carefully he walks on.

9b)

He arrives at some kind of a flimsy bender. He sees some food on a rock: a bottle of soft drink and a heap of grill sausages. He looks around. He doesn't see or hear anyone. He looks around - and then at the food. No one in sight. He's awfully thirsty. Silence continues. The viewer sees Joel watching the little boy from his hiding place, but Jesse fails to notice him. Finally Jesse takes the bottle, and then he hears a shout behind his back.

Joel:
Hey!

Horrified, Jesse turns around. Joel looks angry.

Joel:
Beat it, thief!

Jesse:
So...sorry.

Joel:
Get lost!

Jesse:
Yeah...

Jesse leaves. Joel sees that the little boy is terribly upset. He sees the piece of paper on the back of Jesse's jacket. He changes his mind.

Joel:
Hey, boy!

Jesse turns to him. Joel takes the bottle and beckons Jesse to follow.

Joel:
You were thirsty, right?

Jesse follows him with hesitating steps. Joel removes the piece of paper from Jesse's jacket. Jesse sees the text and hangs his head. He crumples up the paper and throws it into the fire.

10. SAUSAGE AND TEDDY BEAR
EXT, FOREST, LATE EVENING
JESSE, JOEL

Joel has lit a campfire in a clearing in the forest. Jesse looks very serious. He sits and stares at the sausage he's grilling over the fire. Joel already eats his, looking at Jesse. Jesse avoids his eyes. Joel takes some mustard, stares and wonders what sort of fellow the speechless little boy is. He'd like to make some contact. Jesse takes off his jacket and continues grilling, as serious as ever. Joel sees the teddy bear peeping out of the pocket of Jesse's jacket. He snatches it in his hand.

Jesse:
Give it to me!

Joel looks at the teddy; he doesn't think Jesse is serious.

Jesse:
Give it to me!

Joel does not obey him and cannot understand why Jesse is so annoyed. Jesse drops the whittling stick and attacks Joel. Joel is surprised of Jesse's reaction - wasn't it a sore spot! He meant only good, trying to make contact. He holds Jesse, who gradually calms down and stops to fight.

Joel:
(soothing) It's all right.

11. TOGETHER
EXT. FOREST, LATE EVENING
JESSE, JOEL

The packet of sausages is empty; they boys are setting side by side, eating the final bites. Joel offers a swig out of his bottle of soft drink. Jesse thanks and takes a gulp. Joel takes the bottle back and, having drunk out of it, belches audibly. Jesse begins to relax; he laughs at Joel's belching. Jesse takes another swig and tries to belch, too. Joel laughs. Joel takes the teddy bear and pretends it smells at the empty sausage packet. It utters sounds as if it were sorry the packet is empty. The teddy finds the mustard, is delighted and pretends to eat it as Joel smacks his lips. Jesse must laugh. Joel throws the teddy to Jesse, who throws it back to Joel. They toss the teddy back and forth and play tricks. It all becomes funnier and funnier; even Jesse is joking with the teddy. The teddy is thrown further away to the shore, and Joel goes for it.

12. JOEL SEES LIGHT
EXT, BEACH, LATE EVENING
JOEL

The evening is turning into night. While Joel is about to pick up the teddy on the shore, he sees something on the opposite shore: moving beams of light. Joel startles and slowly moves behind a tree to watch. (Or the teddy may remain on the shore – Jesse picks it up as he returns to the bender?)

13. SEARCHING FOR JESSE
EXT, OPPOSITE SHORE, LATE EVENING
TEACHER

The teacher and one of the supervisors walk around with a torch. They are calling Jesse.

14. RUNAWAYS

EXT, FOREST, LATE EVENING

JOEL

Faint calls are heard from the opposite side of the lake. Joel returns to the place of the fire and quickly begins to collect his things. Jesse is astonished at Joel's change of behaviour. He stands up to see what the reason for Joel's reaction was. He sees the torch lights too. He realizes: the police are searching for Joel!

Jesse:

Are they looking for you?

Joel doesn't answer.

Jesse:

I thought...

Jesse is relieved for a moment. They were after Joel, not him! Jesse looks once more across the lake. Now he can also hear a cry: "Jesse!" Jesse startles. They are after him! Joel sees Jesse's reaction. For a second the boys look at each other and realize they both are runaways. Joel also hears the name the searchers are calling.

Joel:

I see. Jesse?

Jesse nods. Joel holds out his hand.

Joel:

Joel.

They shake hands. Joel pretends Jesse is pressing his hand so hard that it hurts. Jesse laughs. Joel is in a hurry again - he quickly draws the zipper of his rucksack.

Joel:

Let's go!

Jesse grins, nods, and takes to his heels to keep pace with Joel, who is striding along.

15. JESSE DECIDES AGAINST

EXT, ROAD, LATE EVENING

JESSE, JOEL, DRIVER

Jesse and Joel have found their way out of the forest and escaped the searchers. They are walking on the roadside. The boys play as they walk. For instance, Joel is dangling Jesse - the atmosphere is brotherly. Then a car approaches. Joel ends the play, lets Jesse down and puts up his thumb.

The car drives past. Jesse realizes that he is supposed to get on an unknown car and end up who knows where... Joel swings the rucksack from his shoulders and sits down to dig cigarettes and a

lighter from his rucksack. Another approaching car interrupts him; he quickly gets on his feet and puts up his thumb. The car slows down and stops at some distance. Joel runs to the car, and on leaving happens to knock down his rucksack. While Jesse lifts the rucksack he sees it contains brand new MP3 players in unopened packages and a number of identical CDs. Jesse realizes that Joel is a thief. Joel comes for his rucksack and Jesse. Jesse shakes his head; he's not going to join him. Jesse hands him his lighter which he picked up from the ground. Joel does not accept it; he gives it to Jesse. Joel waves goodbye. Jesse waves his hand too. Joel gets into the car and the car drives away. Jesse is completely alone.

16. JESSE'S NIGHT OF HORRORS
EXT, FOREST, LATE EVENING
JESSE

He returns to the bender. He no longer sees the lights or hears the voices of the searchers. (He finds his teddy bear, if it remained on the shore in act 12.) Jesse watches the darkness around him, horrified, and then crouches down behind a rock, pressing the teddy bear in his hand. Jesse is surrounded by sounds (and possibly trees swaying in the wind like shadows), like in the tent nightmare in the beginning. The mental image which Jesse had at seeing the police car now returns and is blended with the early nightmare: an image of Tomi's dead face, the sound of an ambulance siren, the flashing lights of a police car, the cries and torch lights of the searchers, Joel, children's distorted laughter... Jesse is surrounded by solitude, the threatening dark forest with its sounds... the deepest moment of horror, fear and solitude. The music and sound world is strong. The children's laugh in his ears gets louder and louder and Jesse gains inner strength. He opens his eyes and puts the teddy down. He decides to make it. (The teddy may be left here: for instance he gets up and kicks it from him. But this can be done in a softer way, if kicking feels too harsh.) He pokes the extinguished fire and manages to rekindle it with the lighter he got from Joel. He crouches over the fire leaning against a stone; he stares at the fire and thinks; he panics no longer.

17 + 18. JESSE'S RETURN
EXT, CAMPSITE, EARLY MORNING.
JESSE, TEACHER, SUPERVISORS, CHILDREN, POLICE OFFICERS

Jesse approaches the campsite from the same direction which he took the night before. He sees a police car behind the trees. He stares at the sight, anxiously. There are two police officers, and one is writing down something the teacher says. The whole group of children is there, but he cannot see Tomi. Jesse hesitates for a moment, but cannot run away any longer; he has made up his mind. He takes a deep breath and, with shaking legs sets out towards the crowd. Everyone turns to look at Jesse. Jesse goes to the police officers - and he is taken to the police car.

19 WHAT NOW?
CAMPSITE
EXT. MORNING.
Children, Tomi.

The children are waiting for Jesse to come out of the police car. Tomi is standing among the crowd. Everyone looks serious: What will happen not?

20 SORRY
CAMPSITE

EXT., MORNING

CHILDREN, JESSE, TOMI, POLICE OFFICERS, TEACHER

Jesse gets off the police car. Jesse sees Tomi. Their eyes meet. They both look relieved. (In the background the police car leaves) The children surround Jesse chattering "Where have you been? Guess if we've been looking for you!" Jesse smiles wearily. The camera follows Tomi, who stands alone a little further away, watching Jesse and the other children. Jesse looks at Tomi. Jesse leaves the children and goes to Tomi.

Jesse:

Sorry.

Tomi:

Yeah. Sorry.

The boys shake hands.