

Secondhand Lions

by
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PINK REVISION - November 3, 2002
BLUE REVISION - September 13, 2002
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- 1 INT. OPEN COCKPIT BIPLANE - FLYING - DAY 1
- OLD MEN
YA-HOOOO!!!
- Wearing goggles and helmets, two old men SCREAM like crazy kids as their SPUTTERING biplane loops and rolls.
- 2 EXT. BENEATH A SHADY HIGHWAY UNDERPASS - DAY 2
- A SHERIFF'S DEPUTY naps inside his police cruiser. Suddenly, his radar WAILS: it flashes "120". *
- ROAR! The biplane BLASTS past, upside down, the old men HOLLER and wave. The cop SCREECHES off after the biplane, lights and SIREN BLAZING.
- 3 INT. OPEN COCKPIT BIPLANE - FLYING - DAY 3
- Upside down, the old men CACKLE as the police cruiser quickly, impotently falls away below.
- 4 EXT. LOW, ON THE GROUND - SUNSET 4
- The plane flies away, barely under control: it careens and SPUTTERS off into a huge heroic sunset.
- 5 INT. CLUTTERED ARTIST'S STUDIO - DAY 5
- A phone RINGS. A hand sketches: a whimsical lion peers out of a cornfield. The ARTIST picks up the phone:
- ARTIST (into phone)
Hello?
- TELEPHONE (V.O.)
Walter Caldwell...? I have bad news. It's about your two uncles...
- 6 INT. MODERN-ERA CAR - MOVING - DAY 6
- He drives past a lonely landscape. A distant voice ECHOES:
- MAE (V.O.)
Walter...? Walter...?!

7 INT. BEAT-UP MID-50'S CADILLAC - MOVING - DAY 7

MATCH DISSOLVE: a boy, WALTER stares out at the same landscape. He is pale, quiet: one of life's wallflowers. The clothes, the car, the road signs, the RADIO MUSIC... all say the time is now the early 1960's.

His mother, MAE, drives; she is far deeper into her desperate thirties than she will ever admit.

MAE

Walter! Good news! You're spending the summer with your two uncles....

Walter CHOKES, lunges for the window and hangs out it, THROWING-UP. Mae scowls, fires up a long cigarette.

MAE (Cont'd)

It'll only be a few weeks, a month or two, tops. I'll definitely come get you before school starts.

Walter turns from the window and sits, pale.

WALTER

That's what you said at that summer camp. And the time with the nuns. And before that...

MAE

Walter! Look! I promise this time. Scout's honor. OK...? Cross-my-heart-hope-to-die! OK?

Walter still isn't buying it. Mae SIGHS.

MAE (Cont'd)

Walter: someday you're gonna have to learn to trust people. Or you'll grow up bitter and disappointed.

He looks bitter and disappointed right now.

WALTER

Where you going this time?

MAE

"The Fort Worth College of Court Reporting". I met a guy last night, he's pulling some strings. Court Reporters have their pick of good jobs, and their pick of good husband material: lawyers, judges, cops...

Walter thinks; DISSOLVE TO:

8 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A COURTROOM 8

Dreamlike, a quick jump into Walter's head: in an imagined courtroom, Mae busily court-reports, avoiding the admiring smiles of respectable LAWYERS, COPS, THE JUDGE...

...and returns the lewd grin of a slimy CONVICT in chains.

9 BACK TO SCENE 9

Walter SIGHS, glumly looks back out the window.

MAE

You'll have fun with your uncles.
You'll see.

WALTER

Mom. You're an only child.
(off her look:)
I know what uncles are.

Mae colors slightly, exhales hard, a blast of smoke.

MAE

Well Mr. Smarty-pants, they really are your uncles: your great uncles, my mother's brothers. They disappeared forty years ago and just now showed up back here in Texas.

WALTER

Can't I come with you?

MAE

No! I'm gonna be working my little tail off learning Court Reporting! I'm doing everything I can to keep this family together, Walter. How about some help here?! OK?

He nods, retreats back into his silence.

MAE (Cont'd)

Now look. They say these two old men got millions stashed away, in cash. They got no kids, nobody to leave all that money to. And me and you, why, we're as close as any family they got...

WALT

You want them to like me so they'll die and leave us their money?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

MAE

We could settle down, maybe buy a house: wouldn't that be nice...?
 (Walter looks wistful)
 But watch out for other relatives. You wouldn't believe all the crooks, backstabbers and thieves we have in this family...

Walter nods soberly. Mae turns the Cadillac onto a dirt road; it's flanked by a huge terrifying sign: "NO TRESPASSING! Violators will DISAPPEAR!" Walter GASPS.

MAE (Cont'd)

This is it! Oh, look at your face.

She TSK-TSKS, SPITS in a Kleenex, rubs it over his face, as his big eyes follow more alarming signs: "DANGER! EXPLOSIVES!" "KEEP OUT! WEAPONS TESTING RANGE!"

MAE (Cont'd)

By the way: I hear these two were in some state nuthouse for forty years, and got all their money from a big lawsuit or something...

Walter GULPS. More signs: "LOOSE RABID ATTACK DOGS!" "NUCLEAR RADIATION! PERSONNEL IN PROTECTIVE SUITS ONLY!"

WALTER

Maybe we should'a called first....

MAE

Naa! Older people just love surprises.... Here we are!

The Cadillac pulls up; Walter looks out, GULPS:

10 EXT. THE UNCLES' HOME/COMPOUND - DAY

10

A ramshackle home: a tower leans crookedly. Beyond, a wide, blue lake fades into the horizon. Motley chickens loiter around an old barn. An old truck rusts silently.

Dogs HOWL: a pack of ugly stray dogs races up and SLAMS into the car, HOWLING, WAILING, teeth SNAPPING.

MAE

Show them you're friendly. Let them smell your hand.

Walter thinks not. The dogs are joined by a large SQUEALING hog, another member of the dog pack. Then, GUNSHOTS: the dogs race off. More GUNSHOTS and YELLS.

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10 CONTINUED:

10

MAE (Cont'd)
 Sounds like they're down by that
 lake. Come on.

11 EXT. SHORE OF THE LAKE - DAY

11

In shallow water, a catfish swims. The water EXPLODES.

Standing out in the lake, wearing big hip-waders, HUB and
 GARTH fire shotguns down into the water. KA-BOOM!

HUB
 Where'd it go?

GARTH
 There! Between your feet!

HUB
 Ha! Winged him!

GARTH
 He's running for it!

Both BLAST AWAY at the frantic fish: BAM-BAM-BAM! CLICK.

GARTH (Cont'd)
 Damn! Empty!

HUB
 You get ammo! I'll cover him!

MAE (O.S.)
Yoo hoo!

Startled, both look up: at the shoreline, Mae waves.

HUB
 (to Garth, disgusted)
 You sent for a hooker?

MAE
 Uncle Hub! Uncle Garth! It's me!
 Mae! Your niece! Pearl's daughter!
 And I brought Walter! Your nephew!

Behind her, Walter peers out timidly. The two men CURSE:

GARTH
Relatives!

HUB
Damn it!

12 EXT. UNCLE'S HOME BACK PORCH - DAY 12

The wet angry men storm up, pursued by the wheedling Mae.

HUB

We're old, dammit! Leave us alone!

GARTH

Last thing we need is some little
sissy-boy hanging around all summer!

The furious men storm inside. Mae smiles at her son.

MAE

Walter honey? Why don't you stay
out here and play.

She goes in; Walter sits, hears the ARGUMENT CONTINUE:

MAE (O.S.) (Cont'd)

He can help out here! Do chores!

HUB (O.S.)

Help out? Look at him: the kid's
a damn weenie!

MAE (O.S.)

That's why he needs to be around
real men! Like you two!

Walter SIGHS. A shadow covers him: the pig glares right
in Walter's face, eyeball to eyeball, almost... hungrily.

WALTER

Good boy. Nice doggie! Go play.

The pig GROWLS, a pretty-fair dog imitation.

WALTER (Cont'd)

Mom...?

13 EXT. UNCLES HOME/BY THE CADILLAC - DAY 13

Mae STARTS THE ENGINE. Beside the car, Walter stands,
miserable, shoulders slumped, a shoddy bag at his feet.

MAE

This is for your own good, Walter...
You know, I bet all that money's
hidden real close-by. Imagine!
Real buried treasure, like in those
books you're always reading!

Walter's misery remains impregnable. Mae gives up.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

MAE (Cont'd)

Walter: maybe if you'd smile once
in a while, then people might like
you.

He sees two hostile uncles staring, arms crossed, furious.

MAE (Cont'd)

Now. Give me a big smile to
remember you by.

Walter tries: it's more of a grimace than a grin.

MAE (Cont'd)

You're gonna have to work on that
smile while I'm gone. OK?

Walter nods solemnly. Mae blows a kiss and motors off.
Morose, Walter watches the dogs chase the Cadillac away.

Walter picks up his bag, turns, looks up at the brothers:
OK, now what? Finally:

GARTH

Well. Supper time.

14 INT. THE KITCHEN TABLE - DAY

14

Walter watches the uncles wolf down fish, steak, sausage.
The dogs and the pig crowd to look in a porch window.

Walter stares down at huge portions of shot-up fish, steak,
and sausage. He tries the fish, bites something hard,
SPITS a shotgun pellet out onto his plate: PLINK. SIGH.
He hacks off a chunk of steak, chews with all his strength.

WALTER

This steak is... weird.

HUB

Venison! Not steak!

Walter frowns, decides to try the sausage: not bad.

HUB (Cont'd)

Pork!

GARTH

We raise our own pigs.

Walter freezes mid-bite, looks at the window: now the pig
glares even more murderously at him, and GROWLS. Then,
Hub suddenly SLAMS his fist down on the table.

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14 CONTINUED:

14

HUB

Know what I hate about houseguests?
This! Dinner table chit-chat!
 Acting so damn nice and polite!

GARTH

Hell Hub! Then just be yourself!

Hub glares at Walter: well? Walter GULPS, nods, agrees.
 Dinner resumes, in SILENCE. Walter eats and tries to
 ignore the pig's now-murderous stare.

15 EXT. FRONT PORCH - LATE DAY

15

The uncles sit, sipping huge glasses of what may be iced
 tea; beside them, two shotguns stand ready, close at hand.

Sitting on the porch steps, Walter wonders: they seem to
 be waiting for something... Finally, he SIGHS.

WALTER

If my mom calls, can we hear the
 phone out here?

GARTH

Don't have one.

WALTER

No telephone?

Walter thinks about that.

WALTER (Cont'd)

OK if I watch television?

GARTH

Ain't got one.

WALTER

No television? What do you do?

Dizzy, Walter wonders if he's fallen off the edge of the
 planet. GRAVEL CRUNCHES: a car approaches.

Both men lean forward, PUMP their shotguns. Below, a
 SMILING SALESMAN alights from his car.

SALESMAN

Gentlemen! Word is out you two
 are sophisticated men of means.
 Do you worry about the future? Of
 course you do! That's why I, a
 representative of the Mississippi
 Mutual Insurance Company...

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

BLAM-BLAM! Hub and Garth fire BLASTS just over the salesman's head. Walter YELPS, ducks. The Salesman SHRIEKS, jumps in his car, SCREECHES off. The dogs HOWL and chase the car away.

Walter shivers, stunned; he stares as the brothers calmly sit back down, drink, and reload.

WALTER

There's plenty of entertainment on TV. Educational stuff too! It's a good thing to do in the evenings!

GRAVEL CRUNCHES again. The brothers raise their shotguns. A GRINNING SALESMAN appears:

GRINNING SALESMAN

Rumor has it you two got millions stashed away! Why not put that money to work for you with the high return only investing in gold and silver can bring....

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! Another salesman flees for his life. The brothers sip reflectively, and reload.

WALTER

Everybody loves TV! You oughta get one! You'd like it! Really!

The brothers consider that. Gravel CRUNCHES: A BEAMING SALESMAN opens his trunk: a display of kitchen gadgets. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! The salesman hightails it away. Finally, Hub turns to Walter, and says definitively:

HUB

No TV.

The brothers sit back reflectively.

GARTH

Nice evening... Peaceful.

16 INT. STAIRS LEADING UP - NIGHT

16

Walter gingerly cradles a lit lantern and his bag; he stares up at narrow, steep stairs, winding up out of sight.

GARTH

You sleep up there... the tower.

It sounds so ominous. Walter GULPS, nods, inches upstairs.

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16 CONTINUED: 16

GARTH (Cont'd)

Hey! We don't know nothing about kids. If you need something....

HUB

Find it yourself! Better yet, learn to do without!

GARTH

We're both gettin' old...

HUB

...and fixin' to die any minute!
If we kick off in the middle of the night, you're on your own.

Eyes huge, Walter stares at them, his imagination whirls:

17 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE KITCHEN 17

In his p.j.s, Walter comes in for breakfast, YAWNS, calmly sits at the table beside two clothed skeletons, the former Hub and Garth. Walter nonchalantly MUNCHES his Cheerios.

18 BACK TO SCENE - WITH WALTER ON THE STAIRS 18

Walter flinches, nods; he continues up the steep steps.

HUB

Jumpy little feller.

GARTH

Mmmm. Quiet though....

19 INT. WALTER'S TOWER ROOM - NIGHT 19

Walter staggers in, looks around... the tower room is heaped with debris, trunks, chests, suitcases, junk.

He opens his bag, takes out a toothbrush, sees a small door by the stairs: a bathroom? He opens the door, something tumbles over him: an old Santa Claus costume.

He tries on the beard, admires his reflection in a murky mirror. Then, he hears: downstairs, two snoring-world-champions WARBLE and hit every SNORING-note Man can hear. He SIGHS, BRUSHES his teeth, further explores the room:

One trunk is covered with exotic travel stickers. He fingers the big padlock. Locked. Walter looks crushed.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

He crawls into bed; as he leans out to blow out the candle he grabs a big knob on the headboard... the knob comes off in his hand, he tumbles onto the floor.

Walter stares at the knob in his hand: a key falls out. Walter looks at the key, then at the locked trunk. He tries the key in the lock. CLICK: it fits. Slowly, he opens the lid: CREAK... empty. No money, no jewels, only:

WALTER

Sand...?

Puzzled, he runs his fingers through sand that covers the trunk bottom. Enchanted, he SNIFFS a handful: it smells exotic. MUSIC ECHOES, evocative, Arabic perhaps.

Beneath the sand he sees something, picks it up: it's a faded photo of the most beautiful woman he's ever seen; dark hair, olive skin, piercing eyes. Walter wonders.

BANG! A door SLAMS. Walter leaps to the window, looks out: below, Hub strides purposefully out of the house carrying a toilet plunger; he disappears into darkness.

Walter runs out of the room, leaps down the stairs.

20 EXT. THE FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

20

Walter bursts out the front door, runs after Hub.

21 EXT. THE LAKE SHORE - NIGHT

21

Walter arrives at the lake, looks around: no one there. It's spooky. A NOISE: startled, Walter turns... Hub looms over him, the toilet plunger raised in attack.

WALTER

Aaaagh!

Walter cowers. But Hub stumbles on past, down towards the water. Walter stares: Hub now stands at the shore, waiting; silently, the dogs and pig all join Walter.

WALTER (Cont'd)

He's sleep-walking!

The dogs lay down, eyes fixed on Hub. Watching. Waiting.

Hub smiles, a cold smile. Then, with a CRY, he swings his plunger like a sword and begins to fight: parry, thrust, savage overhead cut... Walter watches, eyes wide; from far away, he hears echoes of SWORDS CLANGING, HOOFBEATS, WHINNIES, CRIES OF MEN IN BATTLE.

(CONTINUED)

- 21 CONTINUED: 21
- Walter and the animals watch the thrilling moonlit battle at the water's edge. MATCH DISSOLVE TO:
- 22 EXT. THE LAKE SHORE - DAWN 22
- Morning. Walter, the dogs, and the pig all sleep curled up together. Walter stirs, sits up, looks around:
- The lakeshore is deserted, Hub is gone. Walter wonders: was it all a dream?
- A rooster CROWS. Frantic, he runs toward the house.
- 23 EXT. BACK PORCH/REAR DOOR INTO KITCHEN - MORNING 23
- Walter skulks up, looks in: at the table, Garth works on huge stacks of mail. Garth stands, walks out.
- 24 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING 24
- Walter sneaks in, starts for the stairs... but the stacks of mail are too intriguing. He thumbs through the mail:
- It's all coupon responses from magazines and mail order catalogs; all have "Please have a salesman call" checked or written in. Walter GASPS, shocked. FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. Walter panics, tries to look innocent, as Garth enters.
- GARTH
- Thought you'd run away.
- Walter shakes his head "no". Garth hurriedly gathers up the mail, puts it away. Then, Garth CRACKS eggs into a huge frying pan full of SIZZLING sausage.
- Walter sits, confused. Finally, he just has to ask:
- WALTER
- Y-y-you send mail to all those salesmen? You ask them to come here so you can shoot at them?
- GARTH
- (sighs, finally nods)
- Don't tell Hub. It'd take all the fun out, ruin it for him.
- Walter looks even more confused. Garth stirs the eggs.
- GARTH (Cont'd)
- Every man needs a hobby.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

Walter considers that. Hub enters, rubbing his shoulder.

HUB

Brand new mattress. And I'm still
waking up tired and sore.

Garth smiles knowingly, then sees Walter staring at Hub.
Garth wonders, dishes out eggs and sausage.

Walter eats, then freezes, he's being watched: in the
window, the pig now has an angry rooster perched on its
head; now two animals glare murderously at him. SIGH.

WALTER

So... you two disappeared for
forty whole years? Where were
you?

The brothers chew reflectively. Finally....

GARTH

Africa, mostly.

WALTER

Africa? Where in Africa?

GARTH

North Africa. Morocco, Algeria,
Kenya, the Sudan....

HUB

...but that was long ago, and we're
old and worthless now!

All eat. Silence. Walter tries again.

WALTER

Still, I bet you two sure got lotsa
good stories to tell, huh...?

HUB

Stories! Ain't nothing sadder
than a couple'a has-beens jabbering
about the "good old days". Those
days are through, and so are we!

All eat in silence. Long pause.

GARTH

I don't know how a feller can
concentrate on eating with all
this talk-talk-talk.

For just a second, Walter thinks he sees a twinkle in
Garth's eye. Then, it's gone.

25 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

25

The uncles and the boy hack at hard Texas earth, the start of an ambitious garden. Walter struggles with a too-large hoe. The dogs and pig watch, puzzled.

HUB

I hate this!

GARTH

We're retired. Gardening is what retired people do.

HUB

Why the hell do we want any damn vegetables, anyway?

GARTH

They're good for you. Make you live to be a hundred.

HUB

To hell with that!

He throws down his hoe, storms off.

GARTH

Getting old's bad enough! Getting pissed-off about it don't help!

Walter absorbs this. A horn HONKS: a car drives up, across the new garden rows: loud relatives pile out, all talking at once: RALPH; HELEN; MARTHA, 13; and TWO WILD BOYS, 9.

ALL (all talk)

Uncle Garth! Where's Uncle Hub?
Kids, say hello to Uncle Garth!

CHILDREN

Hello Uncle Garth!

ADULTS (all talk)

We're here for a nice long visit,
the whole weekend! We know how
lonely our favorite uncles get!

Garth CURSES, throws down his hoe, STORMS off. The loving smiles instantly disappear: all turn and glare at Walter.

RALPH

Who are you?

WALTER

W-W-Walter.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

HELEN

Walter, Walter... Mae's boy?

Walter nods. The others look confused. Helen explains:

HELEN (Cont'd)

Pearl's daughter. That loose widow-woman, always "running around".

RALPH

Figures she'd try to muscle in.

HELEN

Is Mae here?

(Walter shakes his head)

How long are you here for?

(he shrugs, who knows?)

Well! We'll just see about that!

She storms off. SCREECH! The kids fly in all directions. The dogpack YELPS, scatters. Ralph glares at Walter.

RALPH

We know what you're up to. And you're not getting away with it.

He stalks off. Walter thinks. Then he throws down his hoe and walks toward the house.

26 EXT. BACK PORCH/REAR DOOR INTO KITCHEN - DAY

26

Walter reaches the door, starts to go in, but hears:

HELEN (O.S.)

Men at your age! Taking in that strange little boy! He's probably robbing you blind!

Inside, Walter sees Hub and Helen ARGUING, toe to toe.

HELEN (Cont'd)

If you want young people around you're welcome to any of mine! They're very well behaved!

Walter hears a SQUEAL behind him, turns: the two wild boys ride the terrorized pig, BAWLING Indian war-whoops. Walter rolls his eyes, looks back inside:

27 INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

27

HUB

Hell! We don't want any damn kids!

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

HELEN

You two can't even take care of yourselves! Now you take in this strange boy with all his problems?!

GARTH

His momma's due back before long.

HELEN

That woman? Ha! What I hear, she may never come back! What then? You'll be stuck with him!

28 WALTER - AT THE REAR SCREEN DOOR

28

Walter, miserable, backs away. He slinks off.

29 EXT. THE FRONT PORCH - DAY

29

Martha sits reading, sees Walter staring at her. She raises a haughty eyebrow: "Well?" On the spot, he BABBLES:

WALTER

I read a lot of books too.

MARTHA

Ooh. I'm so impressed.

He peers at her book: "Horses". He starts to speak...

MARTHA (Cont'd)

Yes: horses. Daddy says when my uncles die I can have a pony.

Walter blinks, scrambles to think of another opener.

WALTER

Uncle Hub and Uncle Garth told how they used to live in Africa.

MARTHA

They're big fat liars. That's what Daddy says. He should know. He's a lawyer.

WALTER

But, but...! Then where were they for forty years? Where'd they get all their money?

MARTHA

They robbed banks.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 29

Walter GASPS. Martha is quite matter-of-fact.

MARTHA (Cont'd)

Daddy has it all figured out.
Years ago, there were these two
famous bank robbers nobody ever
caught. They wore disguises...
(Walter looks dizzy)
The famous Santa Claus Bandits.

Walter GASPS, shaken. Dazed, he slowly goes inside.

30 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 30

HELEN

Take him to the county boy's home!
They know how to handle
troublemakers like him!

GARTH

If his momma doesn't show back up
soon, we may have to...

HUB

If we're lucky, we won't live that
long!

Walter slinks in. Hub and Helen stand toe-to-toe.

HELEN

I'm telling you: take him to the
orphanage right this minute!

HUB

Whether we take him to the orphanage
or tie him up and throw him in the
lake, it's our business, not yours!

Walter GASPS: all turn, see him standing there, wide-eyed.

RALPH

Here he is now! Spying!

Ralph roughly grabs Walter: Walter panics, kicks out and
SMACKS Ralph's knee hard; Ralph YELPS, Walter bolts away.

31 EXT. HIGH OVERLOOKING THE HOUSE - DAY 31

Walter races out the front door and down the driveway; he
streaks toward the road, running away as fast as he can.

32 INT. COLLEGE RECEPTIONIST - EVENING 32

A RECEPTIONIST puts on her hat and coat to leave; but one last CALL COMES IN. She SIGHS, answers.

RECEPTIONIST
Fort Worth College of Court
Reporting....

WALTER (O.S.)
I need to find my mom! She's a
student there!

RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry, we're closed...

33 EXT. PHONE BOOTH OUTSIDE CLOSED GAS STATION - EVENING 33

Walter: exhausted, face streaked with dirt and tears.

WALTER
It's an emergency! Please! Her
name's Mae! Mae Coleman!

She SIGHS, scans a card file. INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION.

RECEPTIONIST
Hmmm. I'm sorry, there's no Mae
Coleman registered here.

WALTER
Oh, well, try Mae Carter....

RECEPTIONIST
Uh... no, I'm sorry...

WALTER
How about Mabel Cartwright? Mame
Callaway? Donna Tomko?

RECEPTIONIST
Young man, are you in some kind of
trouble?

WALTER
She's gotta be there! She just
started....

She takes a deep breath, and replies delicately:

RECEPTIONIST
Our classes all started back in
January. No one could possibly
have just started....

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: 33

Walter GASPS, turns white, the wind knocked out of him.

RECEPTIONIST (Cont'd)

Hello? Hello? Young man! Where
are you...?

Walter panics, hangs up. As darkness falls, a small figure sits on the gas station's low front step and buries his head in his knees.

34 EXT. RALPH'S NEW 1962 BUICK - NIGHT 34

A new 1962 Buick pulls up to a stop sign with three unhappy men inside, out looking for Walter. Hub GRINDS the gears.

RALPH

Ouch! Hub! I don't know why you
have to drive, it's my car....

HUB

Stop whining!

Hub GRINDS the gears again. Ralph glowers.

RALPH

When we find him, that kid's gonna
get a piece of my mind!

Down a ways, Garth sees the gas station... and Walter.

GARTH

There he is....

35 EXT. THE GAS STATION - NIGHT 35

Walter studies a piece of paper.

The Buick pulls in, runs over the air hose: DING-DING.
Walter looks up, goes back to studying his paper.

36 EXT. THE BUICK AT THE GAS STATION - NIGHT 36

Garth and Ralph start to get out.

HUB

Lawyer. Stay in the car.

Ralph starts to argue, sees Hub's glare, sits back down.
Hub nods "go ahead" to Garth, settles back to wait.

GARTH

Hub. Come on.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

HUB

What? Me? You go.

GARTH

Hub. Get out of the car.

Hub CURSES, follows Garth over.

37 EXT. FRONT OF GAS STATION - NIGHT

37

Walter studies his paper. Garth sits on the curb beside Walter, motions for Hub to sit. Hub scowls, but sits.

They look at Walter's paper, a page ripped from a phone book: it's the area code map of the United States.

GARTH

Planning your next move?

Walter nods. Studies his map.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Where you figure on going?

WALTER

Here. Area code 406... Montana.

GARTH

Why Montana?

WALTER

Their license plates say "Big Sky Country".

Hub and Garth nod. It's a good choice. Pause.

HUB

Family...!

GARTH

What Hub means is: sometimes, family can be a real pain in the butt.

Walter's lower-lip quivers, he hides his face in his knees. The two brothers look awkward.

GARTH (Cont'd)

How come you aren't heading to Ft. Worth, where your momma is?

WALTER

She's not there. She lied. Again.

Hub and Garth exchange troubled looks: uh oh.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

GARTH

You got a father somewhere?

WALTER

Mom says he died. World War Two.

Hub and Garth exchange "wait a minute" looks.

GARTH

Kid. That war was over twenty years ago!

WALTER

Yeah, she's not good with numbers. He probably just took off before I was old enough to remember.

GARTH

Look kid. We know you got your heart set on Montana, but it's late... Hub, help me out here.

HUB

Why? Sounds like his mind's made up. Good luck in Montana, kid!

Hub stands to go; Garth yanks him back down.

GARTH

We got better maps than that one, back at the house. Right Hub?

HUB

A man needs a good map, that's for sure....

All nod: all agree on the importance of good maps.

WALTER

I've been in the orphan home before. I don't wanna go back.

HUB

Dammit kid! It ain't our fault you got a lousy damn mother!

Hub is puzzled why Garth now glares furiously at him.

HUB (Cont'd)

What?!

Walter stands. Consults his map, orients himself.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

WALTER

I should get going. Which way is north?

Hub points. Garth shoves Hub's hand down, glares at him. Ralph angrily HONKS his horn. Hub notes it:

HUB

I'll say one thing for this kid: he sure pisses off the relatives.

That gives Garth an idea, an inspired idea:

GARTH

Look kid: do us a favor! If you come back to the house and stay awhile, why, our relatives will hate it! In fact, I bet they'll hate it so much they'll go away and leave us all the hell alone!

HUB

It's so crazy, it just might work!

GARTH

So kid. C'mon! Help us out here!

Walter hesitates. Hub frowns at his watch.

HUB

Make up your mind! We got salesmen back home, waitin' on us!

WALTER

Oh. Guess I could come back, for awhile. Seeing it's so important...

All stand and nod agreement, as if they've just concluded a deal. Hub and Garth walk Walter back to the car.

38 EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

38

The relatives sit beaming at Hub and Garth with phony smiles: they're still here. Hub looks over at Walter:

HUB

So, kid! How's that root beer?

Walter sips a huge root beer, nods: it's good. Then, he blinks: the relatives now glare murderously at him. Hub and Garth lean back, satisfied: "The Plan" is working.

Helen gives Ralph a "go on" sign. He clears his throat:

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

RALPH

Uncle Hub, Uncle Garth, this has been such a wonderful weekend, so I hate to bring this up: but did you two look at those wills I left you?

Hub and Garth shake their heads, and SPIT.

RALPH (Cont'd)

It's best to be prepared...

GARTH

We ain't planning on dying any time soon.

HUB

Speak for yourself!

RALPH

You both need to be thinking about these things, at your age.

GRAVEL CRUNCHES: a car pulls up. A salesman. Hub and Garth smile, jack rounds into their shotguns: KA-CHUNK KA-CHUNK. Helen SHRIEKS. Walter covers his ears.

Below, this SMART SALESMAN leaps out and quickly crouches down behind his car, safe behind cover.

HUB

Damn!

GARTH

He's been here before....

SMART SALESMAN (O.S.)

Don't shoot!

Safe behind his car, the salesman waves a white flag.

GARTH

This is no ordinary salesman...!

HUB

I like a challenge.

SMART SALESMAN

Brothers McCann! Let's talk!

HUB

Come out where we can see you!

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

SMART SALESMAN

Put down your guns! Then I'll
come out!

GARTH

This guy is good.

HUB

I'll cover him, you sneak around....

Walter tugs at Hub's shirt; Hub wheels around, SNAPS:

HUB (Cont'd)

WHAT?!

WALTER

W-W-Why not see what he's selling?

HUB

What the hell for?

WALTER

M-M-Maybe it's something you want!
To b-b-buy!

Hub and Garth exchange flabbergasted looks: it's never
occurred to them. This greatly upsets the relatives:

HELEN

Your uncles know better than to
squander their money like that!

Helen yanks Walter away, but Walter still calls out:

WALTER

But what good is having all that
money if you never spend any?
(relatives look alarmed)
It's no good to you after you're
gone!

Ralph's hands reach for Walter's neck. The uncles think:

GARTH

Could be, the kid has a point...!

HUB

We'll see what the man's selling...
then we shoot him.

GARTH

Good plan!

Both lower their shotguns and amble toward the salesman.
Relatives GROAN. Walter breaks away and follows.

39 THE SALESMAN BESIDE HIS CAR

39

The wary, sweaty Salesman sees the brothers approach.

SMART SALESMAN

Gentlemen! After our previous unsettling encounters, I've searched the world over for the perfect item for two exuberant sportsmen such as yourselves. And I've found it!

He pops open his trunk, removes a large contraption.

SMART SALESMAN (Cont'd)

Voilà!

WALTER

What is it?

SMART SALESMAN

The sport of kings! Up to now, only Heads of State could afford a fine piece of equipment like this. And it's simple enough this child can operate it!

WALTER

Really?

SMART SALESMAN

My boy, just press this button...

Walter presses a button: a powerful arm flings a clay pigeon skyward. The salesman grabs a shotgun out of his trunk, swings it up, and KA-POW! He blasts the clay pigeon. Hub and Garth GASP: it's Love At First Sight.

WALTER

WOW!

SMART SALESMAN

The most powerful machine on the market! And very reasonably priced!

The relatives all scowl and BATTLE:

HELEN

Why, that's the biggest waste of money I've ever...!

RALPH

Mister, you load up that contraption and get the hell out....

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

HUB

WE'LL TAKE IT!

GARTH

And all the targets and ammunition
you can get!

HELEN

Oh no you don't! I won't have my
children around all this gun-
foolishness!

HUB

Then LEAVE!

Garth pulls out a huge money-wad, peels off big bills.
Helen fumes, storms off; her furious family follows.

As Garth counts out money, the Salesman nearly faints:
the once-in-a-lifetime moment every salesman dreams of.

The relatives drive away: all glare daggers at Walter.

40 SUMMER MONTAGE - THE FRONT PORCH - NEXT DAY 40

EVOCATIVE MUSIC PLAYS. Walter stares, stunned, at the
front porch heaped with cases of targets and ammo.

41 SUMMER MONTAGE - LAKE SHORE - THE SKEET SHOOTING MACHINE 41

Walter, with make-shift hearing protection, loads up the
skeet machine, pulls the handle. CLANG!

Clay pigeons WHOOSH out over the lake. Hub and Garth
BLAST away, never miss.

42 SUMMER MONTAGE - A SEED SALESMAN 42

Walter watches Garth select a variety of colorful seed
packets from a SEED SALESMAN. Nearby, Hub scowls.

43 SUMMER MONTAGE - THE GARDEN 43

The uncles and Walter finish planting and admire their
handiwork. Hub pulls out his pouch of chewing tobacco,
gets a plug; he holds the pouch out to Garth, who takes
some. Without thinking, Hub then holds it out to Walter.

Walter anxiously peers deep into the tobacco pouch.
Bravely, he takes the smallest possible piece, puts it in
his mouth, chews... and SWALLOWS.

(CONTINUED)

- 43 CONTINUED: 43
- Walter instantly turns green and starts GAGGING. Garth SLAPS him on the back and glares at Hub. Walter gives Hub a pained look of "How could you?" Hub scowls.
- 44 SUMMER MONTAGE - THE GARDEN 44
- A sprout has just broken the soil. Beyond, Walter lies on the ground, stares at it, amazed. The MUSIC ENDS.
- 45 EXT. THE HOUSE - LATE NIGHT 45
- The house is dark, except for a light high up in the tower.
- 46 INT. THE TOWER - NIGHT 46
- Walter sits in bed, stares at the evocative picture of the mysterious beautiful woman. The ARABIC THEME PLAYS.
- A door SLAMS downstairs. Walter jumps up, looks out: Garth walks toward the barn. Walter runs downstairs.
- 47 INT. DOOR INTO THE BARN - NIGHT 47
- Walter peers in: Garth pushes aside hay bales, reveals... a trapdoor in the floor. Garth descends into the ground.
- Walter GASPS: frightened, but fascinated. He skulks up near the hole, peers down... he hears GARTH CLIMBING BACK UP. He leaps into a pile of hay, burrows deep inside.
- Garth emerges, counting a big wad of cash. He pushes hay bales back into place and leaves. Beat.
- WALT (O.S.)
- Ahhh-choo!
- Inside the haystack, two eyes open wide with wonder.
- 48 INT. THE HIDING PLACE UNDER THE BARN - NIGHT 48
- A flashlight CLICKS on, Walter GASPS: the room is heaped with canvas money bags. Bank bags. Loose bills lay scattered everywhere. Walter inspects one bag's lettering: "First Bank of New York". Suddenly: ARF! ARF!
- Startled, Walter looks up: above, the dogs and pig stare down at him curiously.
- WALTER
- Oh! You scared me!

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

Walter and the animals look at all the money.

WALTER (Cont'd)
This money look stolen to you?
(the dogs look suspicious)
Yeah. Me too.

Walter thinks. He comes to a decision.

WALTER (Cont'd)
There's something we gotta do.

49 EXT. BY THE LAKE - LATE NIGHT

49

The dogs and pig watch Walter dig a hole. Walter picks up: the Santa Claus costume.

WALTER
If the cops find this Santa Claus
costume, the uncles go to jail and
we're all homeless.

The dogs seem to understand. The pig SNIFFS the costume, allows Walter to bury it. Walter TAMPS down the covered hole. There. Then, the dogs BARK, run off.

Curious, Walter follows, sees: at the lake's edge, Hub stands looking far out over the water. It's eerie.

WALTER (Cont'd)
U-u-uncle Hub?

No answer. Walter shivers, finally reaches out to Hub... but a hand grabs him, Walter YELPS: it's Garth.

GARTH
Don't. I tried to wake him once,
he nearly took my head off. Let's
give him a few minutes....
(realizes)
What are you doing out this late?

Walter shrugs innocently. They sit on a rise, overlooking the lake. Hub stands there, motionless. The wind BLOWS.

WALTER
What's wrong with him?

GARTH
Well... A man's body grows old,
but inside, his spirit can be as
young and restless as ever. And
him... in his day, he had more
spirit than twenty men.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

Walter nods: Hub stares far out over the distant horizon.

WALTER

It looks like... he's looking for something.

Garth SIGHS sadly... and finally nods.

WALTER (Cont'd)

What? What's he looking for?

GARTH

He's looking for her.

WALTER

Who? What was her name?

Long pause. Finally, Garth answers.

GARTH

Jasmine.

Walter wonders, eyes wide, remembering the photo he found.

WALTER

OK! Tell me.

The dogs and pig gather closer, as if to listen themselves.

GARTH

You want me to tell the story?
Now? It'll take days....

WALTER

There's no TV: what else have we got to do?

GARTH

Much of it's second, third hand.
Rumors, really. I wasn't there for some of it, and Hub damn sure won't talk about it.

Walter nods and waits, eyes pleading. Garth SIGHS.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Well. My brother was always too restless for Texas. So he convinced our folks he needed to go to Europe. And that I needed to come along. That was the summer of 1914.

A STEAMSHIP WHISTLE BLOWS. Walter's mind whirls:

50 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A STEAMSHIP GANGPLANK/PIER 50

YOUNG HUB AND GARTH, both late teens, leave a ship and enter an exotic French port, full of colorful characters.

GARTH (O.S.)

Unfortunately, just as we arrived in France, so did the Kaiser and the entire German army.

They see headlines: "Germany Invades!"

GARTH (Cont'd)

I wanted to go home, but Hub said we'd tour Europe one step ahead of the Germans. So we did. What a time that was! I remember these girls from Toulon. Twins! We....

51 GARTH AND WALTER 51

Garth catches himself, COUGHS, skips that part.

GARTH

Anyway... eventually, we wound up in Marseilles, with passage booked on the last ship out of Europe, leaving in the morning. My brother decided we should spend our last night enjoying the local nightlife.

52 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A WILD CAN-CAN BAR 52

A WILD BAR: full of CAN-CAN GIRLS, SAILORS, SOLDIERS.

GARTH (O.S.)

He made friends with some soldiers. They bought us drinks: strange, strong drinks.... We woke up on a ship, bound for North Africa. Shanghaied.

WALTER (O.S.)

Shanghaied!

53 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - IN THE HOLD OF A SHIP 53

The brothers wake up, disoriented. Other SHANGHAIED MEN waken in the same state. A SERGEANT yells orders.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

GARTH

We found ourselves in the French Foreign Legion. "It's all my fault", my brother said. He told me not to worry, he'd make sure nothing happened to me.

54 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A FIERCE TRENCH BATTLE - DAY

54

In a narrow front-line trench, Garth ducks: TWO ARABS on horseback fly past just overhead. He leaps up, panics: an ARAB HORSEMAN looms over him, sword high: Garth's a goner. But then: Hub flies in, tackles the Arab, finishes him, grins at his brother. Garth SIGHS, smiles his thanks.

GARTH

And, in four long years of fighting all over North Africa, battling Germans, Turks, and Arabs, nothing ever did. He saved my life countless times....

54A WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A FORTRESS PARAPET WALL - DAY

54A

TURKS with ladders attack a fortress wall: Garth tries to fire, but his rifle's jammed... a huge TURK looms, sword raised. Garth lamely fumbles for his sword... Hub flies in, snatches up his rifle and SWINGS: arms flail as the TURKS on the ladder fall away. Hub grins, hurries off.

GARTH

We fought in many battles, against overwhelming odds, against countless enemies, all fierce and worthy, every one.

54B WALTER'S IMAGINATION - AN EPIC BATTLE - NIGHT

54B

Greatly outnumbered, Garth fights with swords on horseback. A HUGE ARAB knocks Garth off his horse, he falls, can't stand: his leg is broken. Helpless, Garth sees his comrades fall: a line of ARABS, GERMANS, and TURKS overrun the front line, SCREAMING... He's done for. But then: out of the smoke, Hub gallops in, swings Garth up behind him, they ride away, the last survivors of the epic battle.

GARTH

He was promoted to Captain, me to Lieutenant.

55 WALTER - LISTENING RAPTLY

55

GARTH (O.S.)

After the war, we went our separate ways... I ended up leading safaris, mostly for writers and Hollywood folk. But that was too tame for Hub. He got commissions from the new North African governments to put an end to the slave trade....

56 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A DESERT OASIS

56

Horsemen top a hill: young Hub and his Bedouin GALLOP into a encampment. CLANG! Swords collide, SLAVETRADERS fight; VEILED ARAB WOMEN, prisoners tied together, WAIL. Hub frees the women, then single-handedly stands off a counter-attack. The women all watch him, amazed.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: 56

GARTH (O.S.)

No one, slavetrader or Bedouin
alike, had ever seen anything like
him, this mad American who fought
like twenty men....

57 WALTER 57

Walter, all ears and wide eyes, hangs on every word.

HUB (O.S.)

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TWO DOING
OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

Walter jumps: Hub looms over them.

GARTH

Just enjoying the cool night air.

HUB

Neither one of you got a lick of
sense! Go to bed!

Hub storms toward the house, shaking his head. Garth and
Walter exchange shrugs, stand, and follow.

58 EXT. THE UNCLES' MAILBOX - DAY 58

Walter's hand retrieves the mail, a lot of mail-order
catalogs. Then, Walter sees a letter from "Mae Caldwell".

59 EXT. THE FRONT PORCH - DAY 59

Walter rips open the letter, reads....

MAE (V.O.)

"Dear Walter. How are you? Found
your uncles' money yet?"

(Walter frowns)

"Here I am at school in Fort Worth,
my nose to the Court Reporting
grindstone...."

Walter looks at the envelope, stares at the postmark:
"Las Vegas, Nevada. America's Fun-Tier!" He crumbles
the letter. He sits, eyes wet. SNIFFLES.

Inside the screen door, Garth watches, looks thoughtful.

HUB (O.S.)

Damn you, brother! I'm not going
anywhere looking like this!

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

Hub pushes Garth Hub out onto the porch: both wear stiff new bib-overalls and straw hats, price tags fluttering.

HUB (Cont'd)

I look like a damn sharecropper!

GARTH

We're gardening! This is what gardeners wear!

Hub stalks off. Garth turns to Walter.

GARTH (Cont'd)

I bought you some clothes. They're up in your room.

60 EXT. GARDEN - DAY

60

Hub, Garth, and Walter hoe: all three wear new bib-overalls and straw hats. The plants are knee-high now, identical.

Walter watches Hub, fascinated: Hub attacks the ground as if it was a fight to the death.

HUB

We need this much damn garden?

GARTH

Think how good all these vegetables are gonna taste. Peas, beans, squash, tomatoes....

Walter scans the garden: it's all identical knee-high green stalks, every plant just alike. He wonders...

WALTER

What's this row?

Garth glances at the row's seed packet on a stake.

GARTH

Beets.

WALTER

And what's this row?

GARTH

Cabbage.

Garth rows, unconcerned. Walter suspiciously compares the beets and cabbages, back and forth: identical.

WALTER

Aren't beets red smelly things?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

GARTH

That's how they look in cans.
This is how they look growing in
the field.

Now Hub looks suspicious; Walter points to a third row.

WALTER

What's this row?

GARTH

Uhh.... Potatoes.

HUB

Now wait one damn minute! What's
this row?

Garth looks. The packet shows a big bushy plant of:

GARTH

Tomatoes....

Now Garth knows something's wrong. Hub storms through,
YANKING up seed packet stakes that don't match their rows.

HUB

Lettuce! Squash! Sweet potatoes!
Carrots! Bok Choi... Bok Choi?

GARTH

A type of Chinese cabbage....

WALTER

Hey! This row looks right.

They join Walter. Only this packet's photo looks like
its row; in fact, just like all the other rows....

HUB

Corn.

GARTH

All the seeds did look alike, come
to think of it....

HUB

Yeah! Like corn!

GARTH

...but I figured that's how all
seeds are supposed to look....

HUB

Nothing but corn!

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (2)

60

GARTH

Boy. That seed salesman sure saw
us coming....

HUB

CORN!

Fratricide appears imminent. Garth is saved by: HONK!

A truck carrying big crates pulls in: a giraffe's head
sticks far out of one crate. The brothers grin, excited:

HUB (Cont'd)

It's here!

GARTH

Kid! Help him unload! We'll be
right back!

They hurry toward the house. Walter goes to the truck.

61 THE TRUCK

61

The truck says "Acme Animal Movers". Walter peers into
one crate's opening... and YELPS, leaps back as a lion
paw darts out, just misses him. ROAR!

DRIVER

Watch it kid. He's a man-eater.

Walter nods, eyes wide. The DRIVER consults a clipboard.

DRIVER (Cont'd)

This the McCann place?

(Walter nods)

We brought your lion. Sign here.

ROAR! Walter GULPS, signs.

WALTER

But, but... where'd it come from?

The driver SNAPS his gum, checks his clipboard.

DRIVER

Cincinnati.

The bored HELPER leans on the truck and picks his teeth.

HELPER

King of da beasts. Terror of da
jungle.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

DRIVER

Quit yakking and help me unload.

Hub and Garth hustle up: both wear new safari clothes and pith helmets, price tags fluttering. They noisily load big bullets into new huge rifles. The truckers exchange "now I've seen everything" looks.

DRIVER (Cont'd)

So. Where do you want him?

GARTH

Right here will be just fine.

Ammo dry, Hub and Garth stand ready. The truckers start to unload a crate; it says "Cincinnati Zoo" on the side.

WALTER

You bought a lion? A used lion?

GARTH

Stand back kid. You don't want to get mauled and eaten.

ROAR! The brothers grin.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Listen to him!

HUB

A big one!

WALTER

What are you doing?

GARTH

Brother, this was the best idea you ever had!

HUB

This lion head'll sure look good hanging over our fireplace.

WALTER

What fireplace? You don't have a fireplace!

HUB

We'll buy one.

WALTER

You're gonna shoot it?

The crate is down. Another ROAR: but the ROARS all comes from another crate, one still on the truck.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

61

GARTH

Hey! This the right crate?

The driver checks a clipboard, nods.

HUB

We want that lion!

DRIVER

It's going to Fresno.

Garth puts an ear to their crate: he hears nothing.

GARTH

You sure there's a lion in here?

DRIVER

Absolutely! Be seein' ya!

HELPER

Nice cornfield you got there!

The truck pulls away. All stare at the silent crate. Hub kicks it. Nothing. Garth listens again:

GARTH

I hear breathing. He's in there all right!

On the soundtrack, AFRICAN DRUMS begin to BEAT. LOUDER. Hub aims at the crate as Garth unhooks the crate's latches.

WALTER

I don't think this is very sporting...

HUB

Kid, at our age, this is as sporting as we get.

GARTH

Walter, come here.

Garth lifts the wary Walter atop the crate.

GARTH (Cont'd)

When I give the word, pull this.

The uncles raise their rifles. Drums BEAT LOUDER, FASTER.

WALTER

Maybe I should have a gun too. Just in case....

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (3)

61

GARTH

Pull!

Walter sweats, pulls, ducks. The crate side falls, SPLAT! Hub and Garth aim, the DRUMS BEAT TO A CRESCENDO... and nothing happens. The DRUMS TRAIL OFF. Pause. Walter peeks between his fingers.

HUB

Hey! Come on out of there!

Nothing. All look in: a mangy lion looks out at them.

GARTH

Hey you! In the crate! Get your lion butt outta there!

Nothing. Walter, still atop the crate, peers in upside-down: the lion just sits there, looking bored. It YAWNS.

WALTER

It looks awful tame....

GARTH

This lion's no good! It's... defective!

HUB

It's alive! That's the main thing!

GARTH

Well then, go ahead! Shoot it!

HUB

That wouldn't be sporting, shooting it inside a crate!

GARTH

Yeah? So?

HUB

Wait 'till it sticks its head out. Then we blast it.

Garth shrugs: sounds fair enough. Walter peers in.

WALTER

He looks old. Worn-out looking.

GARTH

Oh! Perfect!

It is indeed a pretty sad looking animal. It YAWNS.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (4)

61

WALTER

He's real old. Look: he's only
got two teeth.

GARTH

Some lion hunt this is!

Walter hops off the crate, takes a step inside.

WALTER

Here kitty, kitty. Nice kitty....

ROAR! Walter scrambles atop Hub's shoulders. All leap
back. Then: COUGH COUGH COUGH, a hacking, old lion cough.

WALTER (Cont'd)

He's sick! You can't shoot him!

HUB

Get off me!

GARTH

Defective and dying. A reject! A
sick zoo cast-off!

WALTER

So can I keep him?

Hub and Garth look at Walter, flabbergasted.

WALTER (Cont'd)

I'll feed him and take care of him
and clean up after him and
everything! I never had a pet of
my very own! So can I keep him?
Huh? Huh? Can I?

Hub GROWLS. Hub looks at Walter seriously.

HUB

So kid. You want to take care of
it? Nurse it back to health?
(Walter GULPS, nods)
Good. Then we shoot it!

Hub and Garth head back to the house, arguing:

GARTH

That's some lion you bought...!

HUB

Yeah? That's some garden seeds
you bought...!

As Walter closes the crate door, he speaks soothingly:

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (5) 61

WALTER

Don't worry. They're not as bad
as they seem right at first....
I'll be right back with supper.

62 EXT. FRONT PORCH - EVENING 62

Hub and Garth watch Walter at the crate, HAMMERING, SAWING.

63 INT. LION'S CAGE - EVENING 63

The lion eats, and curiously watches the crate renovations.

64 EXT. THE CRATE - EVENING 64

The dogs and pig watch as Walter removes every other
vertical slat, making narrow openings.

WALTER

There. Now you can see out.

He looks in: the lion BELCHES contentedly. Walter goes.

The pig and dog rush up, stick their heads inside. ROAR!
All scatter, SQUEALING. From the crate: COUGH-COUGH-COUGH.

The lion stares out at the thick green jungle of leafy
stalks, just out of reach, with an urgent, primal longing.
JUNGLE DRUMS, JUNGLE SOUNDS ECHO.

65 EXT. THE FRONT PORCH - EVENING 65

Walter steps up and sits.

GARTH

You sure he can't get out?

WALTER

(nods)

She. It's a girl lion.

Hub frowns: it figures. He leans back, SIPS....

WALTER (Cont'd)

I named her "Jasmine".

Hub CHOKES, bolts upright, furious:

HUB

Dammit! Have you two been talking
about...?

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

Garth shrugs innocently. Hub glares at Walter: well?

WALTER

I-I-I got it out of a book of Fairy Tales! It just seemed like a good name! For a lion!

Hub storms inside, SLAMS the door.

GARTH

Thanks a lot! You trying to get me killed?

Angry, Garth goes in. Walter wonders, SIGHS.

66 EXT. FEED STORE - DAY

66

Hub, Garth, and Walter follow a FEED STORE OWNER.

FEED STORE OWNER

Sorry it took awhile to come in. In forty years I never had a call for it. I wouldn'ta believed they even made such a thing.

They join others, FARMERS mostly, staring down at a pallet stacked with bags marked:

FARMER

"Purina Lion Chow". I'll be.

The farmers scratch their heads in wonder.

FEED STORE OWNER

If you'll wait a few minutes, my boys will load you up.

Hub frowns, grabs a bag, throws it over his shoulder.

HUB

Garth. Pay the man.

GARTH

Brother, be careful.

FEED STORE OWNER

Mr. McCann, those bags weigh fifty pounds apiece....

Hub glares, stalks off. Even the farmers are impressed.

67 EXT. THE LOADING DOCK - DAY 67

Hub tosses the last of the bags into their old farm truck, straightens his back. Garth and Walter watch, concerned.

HUB

There. If you two old ladies want to get in now, we can go home.

Hub hops down off the dock... suddenly his eyes roll up in his head: he collapses and he crumples to the ground.

GARTH

Hub!

68 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY 68

Ignored by busy HOSPITAL PERSONNEL, Garth and Walter wait, anxious: they closely watch a nearby open doorway where hurried NURSES and DOCTORS rush in and out.

Walter trudges over to a water fountain.

69 WATER FOUNTAIN 69

Walter struggles to operate the water fountain.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Psst! Little boy!

Walter sees a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN motion to him.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (Cont'd)

You're with those McCann brothers?
I know about them.

She motions him closer, lowers her voice:

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (Cont'd)

I know... that they're ex-Mafia
hit-men, on the run with millions
they stole from Al Capone.

WALTER

Uh huh. Excuse me.

70 GARTH AND WALTER 70

Walter joins Garth. They sit silently. Waiting.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

WALTER

Tell me more about Africa. About you and Uncle Hub. And Jasmine.

GARTH

Why would a smart kid like you want to hear hokey old stories?

WALTER

What else we got to do?

Walter waits expectantly. Finally, Garth SIGHS.

GARTH

OK, OK.... Now where was I?

71 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE DESERT OASIS

71

Young Hub and his Bedouin again scatter slavetraders.

WALTER (O.S.)

"No one, slavetrader or Bedouin alike, had ever seen anything like him, this mad American who fought like twenty men..."

GARTH (O.S.)

Oh yeah, right...

TIGHTEN on one particular veiled young WOMAN prisoner.

GARTH (O.S.) (Cont'd)

It just so happened that one woman Hub freed was a handmaiden to a princess.

72 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - JASMINE'S PALACE

72

She is joyfully reunited with her mistress and HANDMAIDENS; all wear veils. EUNUCHS stand guard.

GARTH

She told her mistress the story of her rescue. Most of all, she told her of the handsome heroic American.

The veiled PRINCESS's eyes sing and dance....

GARTH (Cont'd)

"I must meet this man," the Princess said....

The women huddle together, GIGGLING. Plotting.

73 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORE

73

Horse hoofs POUND the shoreline.

GARTH

One day, Hub rode his horse at dawn, along the Mediterranean.

Young Hub rides his magnificent stallion, both horse and rider at the peak of their youth, strength, and power.

GARTH (Cont'd)

When out of nowhere, there appeared another rider who drew up alongside.

An Arab, face covered, turns to ride alongside.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Well! You know Hub. There was no way he'd let any challenge pass. It became a race....

The two ride at breathless speed, flat-out, neck and neck.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Many considered Hub the finest horseman in North Africa. He'd never lost a horse race, not one. But this rider stayed right with him, neck and neck, as the race went on and on. And on.

Hub looks at the mysterious rider in wonder.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Then: a horse stumbled, the horses collided, and both riders flew into the sea. Hub leapt up, his sword drawn, ready for anything. So he thought. He wasn't ready at all for what he saw next....

Hub pulls his sword, whirls... stares: the rider sits up out of the sea, disguise gone, water streams from her long black hair. She meets Hub's eyes, smiles, and LAUGHS.

GARTH (Cont'd)

She was the Princess. She was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. She was....

WALTER (O.S.)

Jasmine!

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

She is, of course, the woman from the picture: Jasmine. Hub laughs. And the two look into each other's eyes.

GARTH (O.S.)

Now most people don't believe in such things nowadays: they say it's something you only find in stories. But when those two first laid eyes on each other, it was honest-to-god, no-kidding, sure-enough, once-in-a-lifetime... "Love At First Sight".

MUSIC SWELLS. The horses caper and court in the surf behind the couple who have eyes only for each other.

74 WALTER

74

Walter listens blissfully; then his eyes focus, he realizes Garth has finished. Walter becomes more and more bothered:

WALTER

Wait a minute. Where is she?

Garth looks at him, surprised. Walter talks in a rush.

WALTER (Cont'd)

If it was true love they would have gotten married and lived happily ever after and she'd be right here with us now! Right?

A shadow of sadness sweeps across Garth's face.

GARTH

Aren't you jumping ahead of the story?

WALTER

Well... OK. Keep going.

GARTH

Well... Things weren't easy for them, back then: they were from different worlds. She was from a royal family, her father a Sultan. But none of that mattered to them. They arranged often, to meet....

75 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A BUSY ARAB MARKETPLACE/BAZAAR

75

Jasmine swoops up behind a waiting Hub. They embrace.

(CONTINUED)

- 75 CONTINUED: 75
- GARTH (O.S.)
They made plans to run away together. But there was one big problem: she was promised to another man, a powerful Sheik from a nearby kingdom, an evil Sheik who wore a patch over one eye.
- 76 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - AN OLD EVIL SHEIK 76
- CLOSE-UP: An Arab whirls around and glares: the SHEIK with one eye. An evil, brutal-looking, ugly old man.
- GARTH (O.S.)
Surprisingly, despite his ruthless ways, the evil Sheik was said to be quite young and handsome....
- 77 WALTER 77
- Walter jumps, startled. He rewinds his imagination:
- 78 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A YOUNG EVIL SHEIK 78
- An Arab whirls and glares, a different SHEIK: this Sheik's young and handsome, but still one nasty customer. WIDEN, REVEAL: in Jasmine's father's palace, the Sheik threatens a kind-looking Sultan, JASMINE'S FATHER.
- GARTH (O.S.)
The evil Sheik heard Jasmine loved another: he threatened her father to hand Jasmine over at once, for their wedding to take place that very night. Her father had no choice. And so the evil Sheik took Jasmine off to his kingdom and locked her away in his harem.
- 79 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE EVIL SHEIK'S HAREM 79
- Imprisoned in a fabulous harem, Jasmine SOBS. OTHER WIVES try to comfort her, but Jasmine will have none of that.
- GARTH
She told the other wives she'd rather die than to be a wife to the evil, heartless Sheik. She hid away a knife, so that when the Sheik came for her that night, she could slit her own throat....

80 WALTER 80

WALTER

Oh! What did Uncle Hub do?!

GARTH

Why, he rescued her, of course...

81 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE EVIL SHEIK'S HAREM 81

Swords CLANG! Hub fights his way through the harem, past WARRIORS and EUNUCHS; wives point him to an alcove where...

...knife poised, Jasmine is about to end her life. Hub slashes the curtain aside. She is saved.

GARTH (O.S.)

As they galloped for the gates of the city, there was only one horseman brave enough to stand in their way: the Sheik.

82 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - AT THE CITY GATES 82

On horseback, the Sheik waits ominously, sword drawn.

GARTH

It was a thrilling battle on horseback, between two expert swordsmen... but Hub drew first blood, a mighty stroke that cut a big long scar down the side of the sheik's once-handsome face.

After a short but thrilling swordfight, Hub and Jasmine race through the gates, toward the desert and freedom.

GARTH (Cont'd)

They galloped away, got married, and lived together happily ever after. The End.

83 THE HOSPITAL 83

Walter revels in the story's after-glow. But then....

WALTER

But wait! If they lived happily ever after, she'd be here. So where the heck is she?! Didn't they have kids? Where are they?

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

Garth looks sad and evasive. A NURSE exits Hub's room.

GARTH

Nurse! What's going on?
(she hurries off)

I wish somebody'd tell us something!

Anxious, both turn to Hub's doorway. Suddenly, medical supplies fly out of the room, SMASH against the wall.

HUB (O.S.)

Where the hell are my pants?!

Garth and Walter sit back and EXHALE, relieved.

CRASH: DOCTORS and NURSES spill out: Hub storms out, head bandaged, wearing a hospital gown, carrying his clothes, trailing an I.V. bottle. He glares at Garth and Walter.

HUB (Cont'd)

Who brought me here? You two?

Garth and Walter shake their heads innocently. Hub glares, storms for the exit. Walter and Garth hurry after him.

84 INT. UNCLES' OLD FARM TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

84

The three ride along in silence: of course, Hub drives.

HUB

Hospitals! Lot of good they are!

GARTH

How would you know? You're never
in one long enough to find out!

Hub scowls; sweating, he squirms, tries to ease his back pain. Garth and Walter see it, know it's getting worse.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Hey! You missed the turn!

HUB

Did not!

GARTH

Home is that way!

HUB

I want to go THIS way!

Ahead out the front windshield, Walter sees the familiar gas station/country store now draped with new signs:

*

*

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: 84

"Now selling BARBECUE!" "Ribs! Sausage! MEAT!" *

WALTER *

Wow! Look at that! That's why we *

went this way, huh Uncle Hub? *

Let's stop! *

Hub nods, pulls over. *

85 INT. GAS STATION/COUNTRY STORE - DAY 85 *

SLAP!: atop butcher paper, huge slabs of ribs, brisket, *

and sausage are piled high by a SCRAWNY OLD WOMAN OWNER. *

At a long bar-like counter, Walter, Hub, and Garth dig *

in. Walter eats his barbecue, but he's all ears. *

GARTH

Brother, someday you're going to

have to start acting your age.

HUB

What the hell does that mean?

GARTH

Your whole life, you've never been

afraid of anything. So what's

eating at you now? Gettin' old?

Dying?

HUB

Hell no!

GARTH

What then? What?

HUB

Being useless!

Pause. Finally Garth nods, he understands.

HUB (Cont'd)

Me and you, we shoulda died in the

last battle of the last war.

GARTH

Unfortunately, we lived.

HUB

It's a damn shame! All around us,

people died, good people. And we

didn't, we're still here. Why?

What the hell for?

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

85

GARTH

I don't know.

HUB

When we were young there was always a reason. A point. Things made sense. There were always things worth dying for. Freedom. Honor. Virtue. Now there's no point to anything. What do we do? We garden.... We outlived our time.

GARTH

Maybe there's still things worth living for, brother...

*

BURP! Startled, Hub and Garth look over at Walter: he grins, embarrassed, his face smeared with grease.

*

*

WALTER

Good barbecue!

*

*

86 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

86

Bearing "Get Well" balloons, relatives peer into Hub's room: they see an empty bed. Helen grabs a DOCTOR.

HELEN

Doctor! Where's Mr. McCann?

DOCTOR

Oh. I'm afraid he's gone....

The relatives try to hide joyful smirks and look somber.

MARTHA

Finally!

HELEN

Well, he led a long, full life... where's the body?

DOCTOR

No, he's gone. Left. Mr. McCann checked himself out....

HELEN

Left? But...! On the phone, it sounded serious!

All look crushed. Martha pouts, STAMPS her foot:

MARTHA

I'll never get a pony!

87 INT. GAS STATION/COUNTRY STORE - DAY

87 *

HUB

These days, nothing makes sense.
Nothing matters.

Through double screen-doors, a convertible SCREECHES UP,
music BLARING. FOUR HOODS jump out: leather jackets,
duck tails. They SLAM open both doors, swagger in, stare
around insolently as if they own the place.

*
*
*
*

Walter watches the old woman scurry into a door marked
"Ladies Room". SLAM. CLICK: she locks the door.

*
*

Three hoods help themselves to six-packs from a cooler.
The leader, FRANKIE, sees the uncles, swaggers over.

*
*

FRANKIE

Hey! Old man! How's that barbecue?
Gimmie some!

*
*

HUB

Get lost, boy. We're busy here.

FRANKIE

What? What did you say?

*

Hub shakes his head, continues to Garth:

HUB

Here's a perfect example of what
I'm talking about. Since this boy
was suckling on his momma's teat
he's been given everything but
discipline. Now his idea of courage
and manhood is to get together
with a bunch of punk friends and
ride around irritating folks too
good-natured to put a stop to it.

Garth nods sadly. The punks are flabbergasted:

FRANKIE

What? Who do you think you are,
old man? Huh?

*
*

Frankie pushes Hub against the bar. Hub's eyes blaze.

*

GARTH

Hub: he's just a dumb kid. Don't
kill him.

The punks LAUGH. Frankie takes a fighting stance.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

FRANKIE

Ha! Hey old man! Answer me! Who do you think you are? Huh?

Frankie swings... but Hub dodges easily. Hub grabs the punk's throat, squeezes hard, lifts him off the ground. Frankie GAGS. Hub's fierce eyes drill deep into the startled, helpless punk's eyes. Hub GROWLS:

HUB

I'm Hub McCann. I've fought in two world wars and countless smaller ones on three continents. I've led thousands of men into battle with everything from horses and swords to artillery and tanks. I've seen the headwaters of the Nile and tribes of natives no white men had ever seen before. I've won and lost a dozen fortunes, killed many men, and loved only one woman with a passion a flea like you could never begin to understand. That's who I am.

Walter's huge eyes shine.

HUB (Cont'd)

Now. Go home... boy.

With one last patented-Hub-look, Hub tosses Frankie away.

HOOD # 1

You're the McCann brothers? We know all about you!

HOOD # 2

Everybody in town says you're escaped Nazi war criminals!

Walter rolls his eyes. Frankie pulls a switchblade: CLICK.

FRANKIE

Come on! We'll show this old bastard who's tough.

The others pull knives: CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

KA-CHUNK. In the store's doorway, Garth now levels a shotgun at the punks. *

GARTH

Now boys, you're fixing to let those teenage hormones get you into a world of trouble.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (2)

87

The pale hoods drop their knives. And Hub is furious.

HUB

Damn it Garth! Did I ask you to
butt in?!

GARTH

You just got out of the hospital!

HUB

Hell, there's only four of 'em!

GARTH

OK, fine. You fight him...
(nods at Frankie)
...then I'll let you fight the
rest of 'em. OK?

Peeved, Hub knows better than to argue, nods angrily.
The hoods look confused. Garth points to Frankie.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Hey, you. Pick up that knife.

FRANKIE

Huh?

GARTH

Son, you need all the help you can
get.

Frankie snatches up his knife, crouches in front of Hub,
and SWISHES the knife back and forth dramatically.

FRANKIE

Come on, old man!

HUB

You're holding the knife wrong.

FRANKIE

Huh?

When Frankie glances at his knife, Hub chops his arm, the
knife flies away, Hub elbows the hood hard in the face.

Garth turns to the other hoods, shakes his head:

GARTH

Sheesh. Oldest trick in the book.

With a HOWL, Frankie rushes Hub, SLAMS into him, fists
flailing: The Fight Is On. The boy flails at Hub, lands
an occasional blow, but mostly just expends energy. Hub,
however, calmly and collectedly takes the young man apart.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (3)

87

Frankie manages a lucky shot, bloodies Hub's nose. Hub touches it, surprised; he smiles, actually pleased.

Walter watches, amazed. The hoods can't believe it:

HOODS

Frankie's losing!

GARTH

Then you three better get in there and help him.

The other hoods charge in. And, for a minute, it appears Hub is at a disadvantage.... But not for long.

Anxious, Walter joins Garth: Garth casually cleans his fingernails with one of the hood's switchblades.

WALTER

How come you're not helping?

GARTH

My brother always hogs the bad guys. He's selfish that way.

WALTER

But there's four of 'em...!

One hood SLAMS against the bar beside them, SLIDES to the ground, unconscious. *

WALTER (Cont'd)

...three of 'em! Couldn't you both share?

GARTH

Naa. After forty years, I'm used to it. Besides... right now, he needs them worse than I do.

Hub fights, a grin on his face: he's having the most fun he's had in years. *

88 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

88

The relatives arrive at the house, look around:

HELEN

They're not home yet.

RALPH

I'm sure, with Hub just out of the hospital, they're taking it slow and easy on the way home.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: 88

Helen nods, he's right. The kids scatter, SCREAMING.
The two wild boys spot the crate by the cornfield.

BOY # 1

What's that?

BOY # 2

Beats me. Let's tear it up!

89 INT/EXT. THE LION'S CRATE 89

The lion sleeps. SAW! HAMMER! CREAK! She opens one eye, sees two boys working furiously on the crate. CREAK: one side of the crate SLAMS to the ground.

BOY # 1

What is it? A lion rug?

BOY # 2

No, stupid! It's stuffed!

The boys jump on the lion, tugging its ears. Then: GROWL!

BOYS

AAAAGGGHHH!

The boys run off SCREAMING.

The lion COUGH-COUGHES, lazily stands, stretches. She stares at the chest-high cornfield; it beckons to her: jungle drums SOUND, exotic birds SHRIEK. She pads out of the crate and disappears into the cornfield-jungle.

90 EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY 90

BOYS

Momma! A lion tried to eat us!

Helen whirls around and SLAPS them.

HELEN

What have I told you about those lies of yours?!

The boys BAWL. A car engine ROARS: the uncles' truck PULLS UP fast, BRAKES hard. Garth and Walter leap out.

RALPH

Where's Uncle Hub? What have you done with Uncle Hub?

The convertible SCREECHES UP: A bruised, happy Hub drives, with four badly beaten passengers, all GROANING.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

HELEN

Lord! There's been an accident!

WALTER

It was a fight! Uncle Hub won!

It was great!

HUB

Kid! Go get some meat!

Beside Hub, Frankie presses a rag to his bloody nose:

FRANKIE

I wadda doe hobe now!

HUB

You're in no shape to go home now...

GROANS from corpses in the rear. Walter runs up with steaks: Hub and Garth slap the steaks onto black eyes.

HELEN

Those are the biggest hoods in the whole county! And you brought them home?

GARTH

We couldn't leave 'em lying in the roadway.

The little boys still BAWL: Helen SMACKS them.

BOYS

But momma! There is a lion!

WALTER

Oh! Jasmine!

(to Hub and Garth)

I gotta feed Jasmine! She hasn't eaten all day! I bet she's really hungry!

The uncles nod distracted. Walter runs off with a steak.

HELEN

Jasmine? And who is Jasmine?

GARTH

The boy's lion.

FRANKIE

Lion? You got a lion?

GARTH

It's locked up.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (2)

90

BOYS

No it isn't! It tried to EAT us!

Everybody freezes, stunned, as the implications sink in.

HUB

The kid. Where'd he go?

GARTH

To feed the lion. Said it was hungry, hadn't eaten all day....

Everyone's eyes go wide at the dire implications.

HUB

GET THE GUNS!

91 EXT. THE CRATE BY THE CORNFIELD - DAY

91

WALTER

Here kitty, kitty. Nice kitty....

Walter peers into the remains of the crate. No lion.

Then, in the nearby cornfield: CORNSTALKS RUSTLE, a moving trail of shaking stalks, like the wake of a submerged shark... it heads straight toward Walter.

WALTER (Cont'd)

Jasmine...?

92 P.O.V. THE LION MOVES THROUGH THE CORNFIELD 'JUNGLE'

92

The Lion's P.O.V. through the "jungle": DRUMBEATS pound faster and faster, as her P.O.V. bursts out of the "jungle", leaps, and flies toward a startled Walter.

WALTER

Jasmine...?

93 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

93

Uncles, relatives, and hoods madly tear out of the house, trailing guns and ammunition, sprint toward the cornfield.

Hub and Garth freeze: in the distance, the lion pins Walter on the ground. Helen SCREAMS. Hub aims.

GARTH

Don't shoot! You'll hit him!

All run closer, guns raised, faces tense.

94 WALTER - AT THE EDGE OF THE CORNFIELD

94

The lion has Walter pinned, eyeball to eyeball.

WALTER

Oof! Get off me, lion-breath!

Jasmine smiles, gives Walter a affectionate lick: SLURP.

WALTER (Cont'd)

Eeee-yuck!

The lion sees everyone approaching, ROARS! It grabs Walter's foot in its mouth, drags him into the "jungle".

Walter's rescuers run up and stare at the "jungle's edge", where Walter and the lion have disappeared.

GARTH

They're gone!

ROAR! SLURP! The rescuers look stricken. All hear LICKING NOISES, SQUEALS, SOUNDS OF STRUGGLE: it sounds dreadful. Helen SCREAMS, faints dead away. THUD.

FRANKIE

We're too late!

HUB

Move in!

JUNGLE DRUMS POUND. All follow Hub and Garth toward the awful NOISES, tense, guns aimed, prepared for the worst....

WALTER (O.S.)

Jasmine! Stop!

HUB

Attack!

All rush in, guns aimed, and freeze: the lion licks Walter, who SQUEALS and tries to temper the lion's wet affection.

WALTER

Yuck! Lion-spit! Blaah!

Walter notices all the guns pointing at them.

WALTER (Cont'd)

Look! She's feeling a lot better!

Walter strokes the lion: she PURRS.

HUB

Jesus! KID!

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94

Hub snatches Walter up, lifts him to eye level and frantically inspects him, top to bottom.

HUB (Cont'd)

You're OK...?

WALTER

Were you worried about me, Uncle Hub?

Hub HARUMPHS... and for once, perhaps the first time ever, Hub seems at a loss for what to say.... Then he glares at everyone standing around:

HUB

You people tryin' to ruin our whole damn crop? Get out of the cornfield!

95 EXT. EDGE OF CORNFIELD - MINUTES LATER - DAY

95

WALTER

Come on kitty! Back in the box!

Hub and Garth watch as Walter tries to drag the lion out of the cornfield; the rescue party stumbles out, drops their guns. Two hoods help revive a weak, dazed Helen:

HELEN

A lion! They bought a lion!

WALTER

But she's real friendly! See?

Walter pulls the lion's tail with all his strength: he's suddenly jerked off his feet back into the cornfield.

WALTER (Cont'd)

Come on kitty! Lions don't belong in cornfields! Bad kitty! Bad lion! Come!

The stunned hoods join the uncles, watch their struggle.

GARTH

The animal seems pretty tame.
(Hub nods, thoughtful)
And if we get rid of it... what are we going to do with a thousand pounds of Purina Lion Chow?

HUB

That is a consideration.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

A crazed Helen stumbles up, hat askew, hair a mess.

HELEN

We're leaving! And we're not coming
back until you get rid of that,
that... monster!

Walter watches, anxious, as Hub and Garth trade dead-pan looks. Then:

HUB

The lion stays.

Walter CHEERS, the hoods grin. Helen storms off.

CHILDREN

'Bye Uncle Hub! 'Bye Uncle Garth!

HELEN

Shut up! Get in the car!

The furious relatives drive away, for the very last time.

Finally, Walter leaves the cornfield: he gives up.

WALTER

She won't come out of the cornfield!

All watch: the lion paces, patrolling her corn-territory.

HUB

She thinks she's in the jungle....
(all realize he's right)
She's a zoo animal. This
cornfield's the closest thing to a
jungle she's ever seen.... The
jungle's in her blood. She knows
it's where she belongs.

The hoods shake their heads, amazed at all this. Far off, jungle drumbeats ECHO, exotic birds CALL.

GARTH

You boys hungry? Wanna stay for
supper?

The hoods shrug: why not? They follow Garth to the house.

FRANKIE

What are we having?

Garth peels the steak off Frankie's face.

GARTH

Meat. Lots of meat....

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: (2)

95

Hub and Walter watch the lion pacing.

WALTER

Look! I think she's happy!

Hub nods; then, a rare sight: Hub smiles. Then, more rare, Walter smiles, his first smile in a long, long time.

96 EXT. FRONT PORCH - EVENING

96

Walter and Garth sit, enjoying the evening. Down by the hood's car, Hub intensely lectures to the young men. In the cornfield the lion ROARS happily; COUGH-COUGH-COUGH

Garth expertly shuffles a deck of cards, with impressive professional-gambler flourishes, deals a hand of solitaire.

WALTER

What's he saying to them?

GARTH

He's giving them his "What Every Boy Needs to Know About Being a Man" speech.

Below, Hub paces back and forth like Patton addressing the troops. The hoods stand up straighter.

GARTH (Cont'd)

A lot of men have heard that speech over the years. A lot of men.

WALTER

Will he give the speech to me?

GARTH

Oh, I guarantee it... Assuming he's still around, of course.

Walter nods, troubled at that.

WALTER

You didn't finish the story. About Uncle Hub and Jasmine.

GARTH

Sure I did: "They got married and lived happily ever after. The End." Remember?

WALTER

But, what happened after that? What happened to her?

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

96

GARTH

You don't believe all this "Africa" stuff...

WALTER

It's a good story! Please...!

GARTH

Well... After Hub rescued Jasmine, several years passed. Wonderful years.

97 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A ROMANTIC BEACH

97

ANGLES: Hub and Jasmine ride along a romantic beach.

GARTH (O.S.)

No two people were ever so happy, so in love. It was perfect.... Except for one thing.

WALTER (O.S.)

The Sheik!

98 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE SHEIK'S PALACE

98

The Sheik rants and curses at his followers.

GARTH

Yes, the Sheik. He hated Hub for stealing Jasmine and for scarring his face. He put a price on Hub's head: ten thousand pieces of gold, a fortune. Assassins came from thousands of miles away....

99 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A BUSY MARKETPLACE/BAZAAR

99

Hub and Jasmine shop: Hub leans down to smell spices... a knife flies in and quivers just over his head.

TWO ASSASSINS with swords leap at them: Hub ducks, SLUGS one; Jasmine throws red pepper in the other's face. He COUGHS, blinded; Hub tosses him into a pile of melons.

GARTH

Many dangerous men tried to kill Hub and get the fortune.

They turn a corner: THREE ASSASSINS rush them. The lovers dart into a stall: Hub yanks out a tent pole, the awning falls over the assassins, traps them.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

Jasmine SIGHS, gives Hub a "Let's go home..." look.

GARTH (Cont'd)

He and Jasmine had to be on guard every minute of every day....

As Hub and Jasmine exit the bazaar: FIVE MOUNTED ASSASSINS DRAW SWORDS. The lovers run back into the crowd, hotly pursued by five horsemen as they duck and dart through the maze of merchant stalls...

Hub ducks: a SIXTH MOUNTED ASSASSIN swings, misses. Hub YANKS him off the horse, leaps up, pulls Jasmine up behind him. They GALLOP away....

100 WALTER

100

WALTER

So how come all those assassins stopped coming? All we get here now are salesman.

GARTH

Hub was furious at the constant danger to Jasmine; he knew the Sheik would never stop. There was only one thing to do. So: one day an assassin led Hub, bound in chains, into the Sheik's fortress to claim the ten thousand pieces of gold.

WALTER

WHAT...?

101 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - SHEIK'S PALACE

101

NIGHT. Two riders on horseback approach the Sheik's fortress: a masked Assassin leads Hub, covered with chains.

Inside, the Sheik's GUARDS surround a face-covered Assassin leading the bound Hub before the evil Sheik.

GARTH (O.S.)

The Assassin was given bags and bags full of gold, more than most men could carry, as the cruel Sheik ordered that Hub be taken down into the Sheik's notorious "Dungeon of One Thousand, Three Hundred and Eighty-Seven Tortures"....

102 WALTER 102

WALTER (O.S.)
What kind of greedy no-good scum
would turn in Uncle Hub for money?

GARTH
Well... I would.

Walter GASPS:

103 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE TORTURE CHAMBER 103

As the Assassin juggles his heavy burden of gold, his facecloth slips just enough to reveal... it's Garth.

WALTER (O.S.)
A ha! It was a trick!

GUARDS lead the helpless, chained Hub into a nightmarish torture chamber. Terrifying HOODED TORTURERS await.

GARTH (O.S.)
In the dungeon, I whipped out my sword and singlehandedly killed everyone and freed Hub, without dropping a single gold coin....

Garth whips out a sword, easily defeats the bad guys, and frees a grateful, humble Hub....

WALTER (O.S.)
Wait a minute! Wait a minute!

104 GARTH, WALTER 104

Walter looks very skeptical.

WALTER
You killed all the bad guys? You saved Uncle Hub? And all that time you were carrying hundreds of pounds of gold?

GARTH
You don't believe I killed all those men and saved Hub?

Walter shakes his head: nope, he doesn't. Garth SIGHS.

GARTH (Cont'd)
Well. Maybe Hub helped a little....

105 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE TORTURE CHAMBER 105

Hub throws off his chains and fights the Sheik's men.
Garth fumbles for his pistol, trying not to drop the gold.

GARTH (O.S.)

We were greatly outnumbered. We
fought incredible odds....

Garth tries to juggle gold and aim, but Hub is faster and
dispatches Garth's target first. Garth scowls as Hub
defeats the bad guys before Garth can fire a single shot.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Then we split up: we each knew
what we had to do....

At the doorway, Hub heroically salutes Garth, runs swiftly
away. Garth hobbles out with his heavy burden of gold.

106 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE SHEIK'S BED CHAMBER 106

GARTH

High in his opulent bed chamber,
the Sheik slept. Until he awoke
with Hub's sword at his throat....

Hub stands atop the bed, his blade pins the Sheik.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Terrified, the Sheik knew his life
was over, that Hub would certainly
kill him. Hub smiled... then
lowered his blade. He threw the
Sheik a sword, honorably offering
his lifelong enemy a fair fight.
"Defend yourself!" Hub cried.

The evil Sheik grins. The fight begins: CLANG-CLANG!
And almost instantly, faster than the eye can follow, Hub
sends the Sheik's sword flying and pins the Sheik once
again, against a pillar, his blade to the Sheik's throat.

GARTH (Cont'd)

It was over in a second: Hub had
humbled him. The Sheik knew he
was surely now a dead man, with no
right to even beg for mercy....

As Hub smiles and raises his blade high, the Sheik falls
to the floor, WHIMPERING, closing his eyes.... And nothing
happens. The Sheik looks up: Hub stands in a window.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

106

GARTH (Cont'd)

Hub told him, "Twice, I held your life in my hands. Twice, I gave it back to you. Next time, your life is mine."

Hub leaps out into darkness. The Sheik runs up, looks out: far, far below, Hub and Garth GALLOP away into the dark desert night.

GARTH (Cont'd)

From that moment on, the assassination attempts stopped. Some say it's because the Sheik knew that, next time, Hub would surely return and kill him, as he had promised.

The Sheik feels his tender but still-intact throat, and stares after the vanished horsemen.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Others say that since Hub had twice spared the Sheik's life, the Sheik felt it was a point of honor to allow his enemy to live.

107 WALTER

107

Walter smiles blissfully. Either way sounds right.

GARTH

Personally, I think the Sheik just got too darn busy once they discovered oil in his kingdom and he became one of the five richest men in the world....

108 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - THE SHEIK AND HIS GOLD

108

The Sheik, surrounded by gold stacked high to the ceiling, looks dazed, helpless with all his wealth.

WALTER (O.S.)

WHAT?!

109 WALTER

109

WALTER

What kinda ending is that?! The bad guy gets filthy rich?! What
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

109

WALTER (Cont'd)
the heck kinda story ends that
way?!

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: (2)

109

GARTH

I just told it the way it happened.

Walter looks very confused. Garth deals another hand.

WALTER

So that's how you got all your money? The gold from the sheik?

Garth does an amazing waterfall of cards a yard long.

GARTH

One of the ways....

Walter blinks. Below, Hub watches the hoods drive away.

WALTER

Hey, wait! You still didn't tell me what happened to Jasmine! After Uncle Hub defeated the Sheik there was nothing standing in their way, right? Then where the HECK is she?! Tell me!

Garth puts a finger to his lips: Hub stiffly ascends the porch, plops down into his chair.

HUB

Those young men will be OK now.

GARTH

Will you?

Hub leans back painfully, exhales.

HUB

Damn it. I feel... old.

GARTH

You've been busy. Terrorizing doctors and nurses, beating up teenagers, chasing after lions. You've had a full day.

HUB

Lucky those boys don't know squat about fighting. It won't be long 'til the kid here can whup my ass.

The more Hub thinks about it, the more it bothers him.

HUB (Cont'd)

Won't be long, I'll be helpless in a fight. Useless.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: (3)

109

He looks sad, bitter. It bothers Walter and Garth.

GARTH

Brother, you'll feel better in a day or two...

Hub waves him quiet, struggles to his feet.

HUB

I'm going to bed. G'night kid.

WALTER

Walter...!

Startled, Hub stares at Walter, who panics:

WALTER (Cont'd)

M-m-my name? It's W-W-Walter.

Hub stares. Beat. Walter sweats. Finally Hub nods.

HUB

"Walter". Doesn't seem... manly enough. How 'bout I call you "Walt"?

WALTER

(beams proudly)

O.K.!

HUB

Goodnight. Walt.

He goes inside. Garth can't believe what he's just seen.

WALTER

Now. Are you finally gonna tell me what happened to Jasmine?

Garth smiles, looks cagey, shuffles too casually.

GARTH

Nope...!

WALTER

WHAT?

GARTH

You want to find out what happened to Jasmine... you have to ask him.

WALTER

What? Ask Uncle Hub, about Jasmine? Are you crazy?! Look what happened last time!

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: (4)

109

GARTH

But you and he are buddies now.
Don't let the fact he's hasn't
spoken about it for forty years
bother you...

WALTER

I can't ask him! Uncle Garth!
Please...?

GARTH

I'm tired of doing all the dirty
work around here. If you want the
end of the story, you'll have to
ask him... Walt.

Garth shuffles the cards, looks very pleased with himself.
Walter looks wide-eyed, trapped.

110 LATE SUMMER MONTAGE - FISHING ON THE LAKE

110

Hub, Garth, and Walter sit in a brand-new fishing boat,
fishing poles in the water, having no luck. Hub looks
impatient as Garth consults a "How to Fish" book. Then
Hub spies a fish, whips out a shotgun, BLASTS it.

Hub proudly holds up his shot-up prize for Walter to
admire. Garth scowls, casts his line, ignores them.

111 LATE SUMMER MONTAGE - THE CORNFIELD

111

Hub, Garth, and Walter look at their corn with pride, at
its peak: huge golden ears. It's a beautiful sight.

112 LATE SUMMER MONTAGE - DINNER TABLE

112

Dinner: a big steak; sausage; and now fresh sweet corn.
Hub, dubious, nibbles: it's great. The three eat happily.

113 LATE SUMMER MONTAGE - BREAKFAST

113

Breakfast: eggs, sausage, and corn. Hub and Walter frown.

114 LATE SUMMER MONTAGE - THE CORNFIELD

114

Hub, Garth, and Walter harvest corn: bushel after bushel.

Jasmine watches curiously. They pluck the ears, leaving
the stalks (and the jungle) intact.

115 LATE SUMMER MONTAGE - WALTER AT A ROADSIDE STAND 115

Walter proudly sits at a home-made roadside stand, surrounded by dozens of bushels of corn. A sign says: "Corn! 25 cents a bushel!" MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

116 LATE SUMMER MONTAGE - THE STAND - DAYS LATER 116

The stand, now abandoned: no corn has been sold, and the prices are marked down and down until it finally reads, "Corn! Free! Take all you want!"

117 LATE SUMMER MONTAGE - THE SKEET THROWING MACHINE 117

Walter sends a clay target flying, reaches into the box for another: it's empty. Now what?

A dog runs up, a ear of corn in its mouth to play catch. Walter smiles, puts the corn on the machine: BOING!

Hub and Garth blast the flying ear of corn out of the sky. Both give Walter "atta boy" grins.

SLOW MOTION: ear after ear of corn poetically bites the dust. By the machine, Garth loads up corn from a bushel.

Walter wrestles with a shotgun larger than he is, getting lessons from Hub; Walter has a pillow tied to his butt. Walter fires, the recoil knocks him onto his pillow-cushioned-butt. Hub slaps Walter on the back.

In the cornfield jungle, the lion watches, happy.

118 INT. TOWER - MORNING 118

Walter struggles into his pants: he can't fasten them at the waist, too small. He looks down: they're now too short. With a surprised grin, Walter realizes: he's grown.

He looks into a murky mirror: he's filled out, his pale complexion now more tanned. Compared to the timid, pale child who arrived in early summer, he's blossomed.

A HONK from outside: Walter looks out the window: a truck pulls into the farm carrying an old biplane.

WALTER

An airplane?

119 EXT. THE FARM - DAY

119

Hub watches DRIVERS unload a broken-down WWI-era biplane. Garth and Walter stare; they're joined by dogs, the pig... the lion sticks her head out of the cornfield and gapes.

GARTH

Hub...?

Garth and Walter exchange troubled looks. The airplane is a wreck: it rolls off the truck on flat rotten tires. CREAK! The tail swings wildly, held by a single wire.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Hub! An aeroplane?

HUB

Yup. Always wanted one.

GARTH

You always said you'd never set foot in an aeroplane! That you don't trust them to fall right out of the sky!

HUB

Yup. They're dangerous, all right. Plenty dangerous....

Hub smiles, a disturbingly dark smile. Walter and Garth circle the plane dubiously: half the propeller is missing. Even the animals look worried. Hub calls to the DRIVER:

HUB (Cont'd)

Does this thing come with a... book, instructions...?

DRIVER

Look inside.

Hub digs through the cockpit, finds a WWI era dog-eared manual "The Airman's Handbook".

HUB

Ah ha!

GARTH

Hub, you don't know the first damn thing about aeroplanes!

Hub dramatically and pointedly opens the manual, reads:

HUB

"To climb, pull back on the stick.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

119

HUB (Cont'd)

To descend, push forward on the stick." See? Everything I need to know is right here.

Garth CURSES, stalks off. Walter and the animals watch, deeply concerned. Hub climbs in; the tail falls off.

HUB (Cont'd)

A little fixin' up, and she'll be in the air in no time.

120 EXT. THE FRONT PORCH - EVENING

120

Garth and Walter sit, waiting for salesman: but Hub isn't there. Both watch him, down by the barn, hard at work on the airplane; CLANKS and POUNDING sounds are heard.

WALTER

Maybe it's just a new hobby. Maybe he doesn't really mean to, you know, do anything crazy.

GARTH

You think so?

Walter shakes his head: he doesn't believe it either.

GARTH (Cont'd)

You ask him yet? About Jasmine?

Walter shakes his head "no".

GARTH (Cont'd)

Well, you better make it quick.

He goes inside. Walter thinks, agonizing.

121 EXT. THE HOUSE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

121

Walter purposefully exits the house, carrying a blanket.

122 EXT. THE LAKESHORE - NIGHT

122

Hub stands at the shoreline, looking out over the water. Walter appears, followed by dogs and pig. Walter stretches way, way up, and drapes the blanket over Hub's shoulders.

Walter paces, deeply troubled. The animals wonder what's going on. Walter has to talk to Hub, he just has to....

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

Finally, gathering all his courage: he creeps to Hub, takes a deep breath... shoves Hub with all his strength and darts away. The dogs YELP, run off. Hub EXPLODES, YELLS, flails, whirls around, starts to come to his senses.

HUB

What the HELL?!!!

(see Walter)

It's the middle of the night!

What in blazes are you...

Hub realizes there's a blanket over his shoulders.

HUB (Cont'd)

Oh. I wondered where all the blankets were coming from...

(sees Walter's look)

What is it? What's the matter?

Walter tries to speak, but all courage is gone. His mouth opens and closes, but no sounds emerge.

HUB (Cont'd)

What...? What is it?

Walter struggles, makes some progress: SQUEAKING NOISES.

HUB (Cont'd)

What? You got something to say, spit it out!

Walter SWALLOWS HARD, shaking, hyperventilating; he blurts:

WALTER

What happened to her, Uncle Hub?

What happened to... Jasmine?

Hub flinches, as if struck hard by a forceful blow; he churns inside. Walter quivers, ready to run. Finally, Hub turns away, and looks far out over the water.

WALTER (Cont'd)

I have to know. I have to!

The wind BLOWS mournfully. Finally:

HUB

She died. She died in childbirth.

Her and the baby.

123 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - AN ARAB HOSPITAL

123

Hub, back turned, head bowed, silhouetted before a Moorish arched window. Don't see his face. Don't need to.

(CONTINUED)

- 123 CONTINUED: 123
- Garth rushes in, still wearing safari clothes; he stands helpless, at his brother's side. MATCH DISSOLVE TO:
- 124 BACK TO SCENE 124
- Hub, stands in the same grief-stricken stance, forty years later: his sorrow and grief still so intense, so crippling, after all those years. Walter's heart breaks in two.
- WALTER
What did you do?
- HUB
I went back to the only life I knew. Back to The Legion.
- 125 WALTER'S IMAGINATION - A LEGION PARADE GROUND 125
- Assembled TROOPS see Hub ride in: they SNAP to attention, sad and proud as Hub slowly rides in to rejoin their ranks.
- HUB (O.S.)
For the next forty years there was always one more war to fight. Then I got too old and came here.
- 126 BACK TO SCENE 126
- HUB
You should go in now. You'll catch cold.
- WALTER
Those stories, about you, about Africa: they're true. Aren't they?
- HUB
It doesn't matter....
- WALTER
It does too! Around my mom I hear so many lies I don't know what to believe in....
- HUB
Dammit, if you want to believe in something, believe in it! Just because something isn't true, that's no reason you can't believe in it!
- Walter blinks, confused. Hub SIGHS....

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED:

126

HUB (Cont'd)

There's a long speech I give to young men. Sounds like you need to hear a piece of it....

(pause)

Some times the things that may or may not be true are the things a man needs to believe in the most. That people are basically good. That honor, virtue, and courage mean everything; that money and power mean nothing. That good always triumphs over evil. That true love never dies.

Walter's eyes are wet. Perhaps, so are Hub's.

HUB (Cont'd)

Doesn't matter if they're true or not. A man should believe in those things anyway. Because they are the things worth believing in.

Walter thinks, finally nods: he understands. They both watch moonlight ripple the water, both lost in thought.

WALTER

That was a good speech.

HUB

Thanks.

WALTER

When are you gonna give me the rest of the speech?

HUB

When you're ready.

WALTER

When's that?

HUB

When you're almost a man....

WALTER

OK! You promise?

Suddenly, Hub realizes where this is going.

HUB

Now wait one minute...!

Walter goes for broke, speaks in a rush:

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED: (2)

126

WALTER

I really need you to give me the rest of the speech! I can't be a good man unless I hear the whole speech, now can I?!

HUB

I see what you're trying to pull!

WALTER

So you have to stick around until I'm grown up so you can give the whole speech to me!

HUB

I'll write it down!

WALTER

No! I want you to give me the speech!

Walter starts to cry: Hub looks awkward, at a loss.

HUB

You won't be living here then...

WALTER

But you're my uncle! I need you to stick around and be my uncle!

Hub frowns, feeling more and more trapped.

WALTER (Cont'd)

And what about Uncle Garth? He needs you! He can't fight off all those salesmen by himself! What about the dogs and the pig and the lion?! We all need you!

HUB

Now you're just being silly.

WALTER

No! It's true! We need you! I know you miss Jasmine, an awful, awful lot! But if you go, we'll all miss you! Just as much as you miss her! Just as much!

Hub looks dazed, rocked. Walter BAWLS, a torrent of tears. Hub stares at the boy: Hub looks completely and utterly helpless, for perhaps only the second time in his life.

Hub agonizes: he looks trapped. Finally he CURSES, angrily throws up his hands.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED: (3)

126

Face still wet, Walter starts to smile: he knows....

HUB

All right, dammit! You win! I'll
stick around and be your damn uncle!
But don't expect me to be happy
about it!

Hub thrusts out his hand to shake on it. Walter SNIFFLES,
grabs Hub in a big hug, mid-thigh. Hub looks startled...
then, he reaches down and gently pats Walter's head.

127 INT. TOWER BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

127

Walter wakes, looks out: in the misty light of pre-dawn,
a CAR PULLS UP outside.

128 INT. FRONT DOOR/LIVING ROOM - PRE-DAWN

128

Walter opens the front door: Mae smiles at him.

MAE

Walter!

WALTER

Mom...?!

They hug; a man (STAN) looms behind her. Walter stares.

MAE

Walter, this is Stan. We're
engaged! Isn't that wonderful?

STAN

Walter! Heard a lot about you!

WALTER

Walt. My name is Walt.

STAN

OK. Walt it is.

Walter sizes up Stan: a bad comb-over, but he seems
friendly enough. Mae hears the uncles' SNORING.

MAE

Your uncles are still sleeping?
It's early, let's not wake them....

They sit on the couch, keep their voices low. Walter
sits on a big chair, his feet don't touch the ground.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

128

MAE (Cont'd)

Stan here is a detective. A private eye, just like in movies.

WALTER

Wow! Really?

STAN

Sure. You want to see my badge?

Walter nods. Stan flips open a badge billfold: Walter tries to look closer, but Stan flips it closed.

MAE

Stan works in Las Vegas. How about that?

WALTER

What about Court Reporting School?

MAE

Oh, I had to quit. Stan wants me to stay home and be a wife and mother. We're gonna buy a house and have lots of kids. You'll have brothers and sisters. Isn't it all wonderful?

Stan smiles, nods. Walter looks dazed, stunned.

MAE (Cont'd)

So Walter. I bet you found where your uncles hid the money, huh?

Walter starts to nod, catches himself... looks stubborn.

WALTER

Why do you want to know?

Stan and Mae SIGH sadly; Stan puts his arm around Walter.

STAN

Walt. Your uncles match the description of two bank robbers from the 20's and 30's.

WALTER

No. You're wrong!

STAN

When Mae told me about them, I got copies of the reports and showed them to her.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED: (2)

128

MAE

It's them all right, honey.

STAN

They used shotguns, wore
disguises...

WALTER

(weakly)

Santa Claus suits?

STAN

Come to think of it, I believe
they did wear Santa Claus suits...

Walter trembles. And remains silent.

STAN (Cont'd)

They stole all that money and shot
people. Innocent people.

WALTER

No! Not them. It can't be!

MAE

Stan knows what he's talking about.

WALTER

But... what about Jasmine? She
and Uncle Hub were in love! I got
her picture!

STAN

Jasmine...! Wasn't that the name
of the woman that drove their
getaway car? I think it was, yeah.
She was wounded, and they both ran
off and left her to die.

Walter's breath is knocked out of him; he GASPS.

STAN (Cont'd)

I know this hurts. But they're
criminals and they lied to you.

Walter starts to CRY. Mae clutches him to her chest.

MAE

My poor baby! In the arms of
vicious criminals! We rushed here
as soon as we knew, we've come to
take you away! Now tell Stan where
the money is and go pack your
things...

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED: (3)

128

Walter looks up at her.

WALTER

Why do you need to know where the money is?

STAN

It's stolen, it doesn't belong to them. Bet it's buried outside, isn't it?

Caught off guard, Walter almost nods, catches himself.

WALTER

But why do you need to know?

MAE

Walter!

Stan stands, takes out a big flashlight.

STAN

Walt, let's take a walk. You can show us around the place.

At the door, Stan and Mae wait for Walter expectantly; dazed, he joins them.

129 EXT. BETWEEN THE HOUSE AND BARN - PRE-DAWN

129

In the eerie, shimmering mists of pre-dawn, Stan shines the light around, watches Walter closely for a reaction: as the beam hits the barn, Walter's eyes widen. They walk toward the barn: Stan uses the flashlight and Walter's reactions as a divining rod.

STAN

Now Walter. Your mother and I found this nice house, just like you always wanted. But we don't have enough for a down payment. We could turn your uncles in for the reward, but they'd go to jail...

He sees Walter shakes even more as they near the barn.

STAN (Cont'd)

I know you wouldn't like that. So we thought: with all the money your uncles have, they'd never miss it if we took some. Especially since we're doing them such a big favor by keeping our mouths shut.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

129

MAE

Since it's stolen, we have as much right to it as they do.

STAN

Nobody gets hurt, and we get a nice home and family. See?

MAE

Isn't it wonderful, Walter? It's what you always wanted! So, Walter.... where is it?

Walter's struggles build and build. Ahead, in the early morning mist... the barn looms.

STAN

C'mon! They're old, they're gonna die soon anyway. You want the government to get it all?

MAE

We finally have our chance to be happy, honey. Just tell us.

They're in front of the barn. Walter shakes, terrified, torn. Then, softly, an Arab flute PLAYS hauntingly.

Suddenly, Walter's struggles cease; his trembling stops. He's made up his mind. He smiles.

WALTER

Hub and Garth didn't rob any banks. They were in Africa.

MAE

Africa? Walter! Be serious!

WALTER

Really! They were shanghaied into the Foreign Legion and had adventures for forty years! They couldn't have robbed any banks!

MAE

Then where'd they get the money?

WALTER

Well, Uncle Garth ransomed Uncle Hub to this rich evil Sheik....

MAE

Walter!

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED: (2)

129

WALTER

...who hated Hub for stealing the Princess Jasmine out of his harem and killing all his assassins....

STAN

Walter, you don't believe that!

WALTER

Yeah. Uh-huh. Sure I do!

MAE

You? Mr. Doubting-Thomas? Here, Stan has actual evidence, and you believe that Africa crap? Walter, you've never believed in anything your entire life! And now you mean to tell me that out of all the things you could have picked to believe in, you believe this? Harems? Princesses? Evil Sheiks?

Walter seems as surprised as her.

WALTER

Yeah...! Isn't that something?

MAE

Now I want you to think hard. Do you really believe this Africa nonsense? Really and truly? From the bottom of your heart?

Walter thinks very, very hard. He seems to search his soul. Then he smiles proudly.

WALTER

Yes. Yes I do.

Mae throws up her hands. Stan takes Walter's arm.

STAN

Mae, go inside and let us men talk.
Man to man.

Walter look troubled at this. So does Mae.

WALTER

Mom...?

STAN

Go on Mae. We'll be right in.

Mae bites her lip anxiously, then nods, walks off. Stan takes Walter by the arm, pulls him into the barn.

130 INT. THE BARN - PRE-DAWN

130

Walter panics as they near the trap door; he struggles.

WALTER

Let go!

Stan SLAPS Walter hard. Walter is stunned. Stan drags Walter to his feet: they're standing on the trap door.

STAN

Now. Let's me and you get a few things straight: you and me can be friends. Or we can be enemies.

The old Walter would have cringed, maybe started crying. But this Walter glares right back.

STAN (Cont'd)

I've had a run of crummy luck lately, and some bad people are looking to make things tough for me. I need that money, I know it's real close, and I'll be damned if some little brat is gonna stand in my way!

Walter glares back at Stan with Hub-like murderous fury.

STAN (Cont'd)

So. Are we friends? Or enemies?

Walter smiles. A very cold smile. A very Hub smile. Somewhere, far off, Arabic music PLAYS.

WALTER

Defend yourself!

STAN

Huh?

Walter kicks the crouching Stan right in the crotch: THUD.

STAN (Cont'd)

OOOF!

Walter runs out of the barn. Stan stumbles after him:

STAN (Cont'd)

Come back here!

- 131 EXT. OUTSIDE THE BARN - PRE-DAWN 131
- Walter runs, looks back: Stan gains on him. Walter darts toward the cornfield; but Stan tackles him.
- Stan pins Walter to the ground, SLAPS him hard. Walter SCREAMS. Stan puts his hand over Walter's mouth.
- Beyond the struggle looms the cornfield. SLAP.
- 132 EXT. THE CORNFIELD - PRE-DAWN 132
- The edge of the cornfield rustles: the lion looks out: she sees Walter pinned on the ground, struggling. SLAP.
- The lion's eyes narrow fiercely: a look never seen on this lion before. GGGRRRRROOOWWLLLL!
- 133 STAN, WALTER 133
- Stan freezes: what was that? Then, behind him, impossibly fast, comes a speeding lion freight train. The lion SLAMS into Stan, both fly off Walter. GRROWWLL!
- Dazed, Walter sits up: what happened? He sees a lion furiously attacking Stan with everything its got. A lion in its prime... A real lion. GRROOWWLL!
- WALTER
....JASMINE...?!
- 134 EXT. THE UNCLES' HOUSE - LONG SHOT 134
- Lights CLICK on: Hub and Garth run out, carrying shotguns.
- 135 EXT. RUNNING FROM FRONT PORCH TOWARD CORNFIELD - DAWN 135
- Hub, Garth, and Mae run toward the frightful HOWLS: GGGRRRROOO... The cry CHOKES and cuts off, mid-roar: there's one last death-rattle WHEEZE... then SILENCE.
- 136 EXT. NEAR THE CORNFIELD - PRE-DAWN 136
- Hub, Garth, and Mae run up, see the lion sprawled atop Stan, both lie still. Walter picks up the lion's head.
- WALTER
Jasmine!
- Hub checks the lion and Stan. Hub shakes his head sadly.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

HUB

Dead.

MAE

My god! He's dead? Stan's dead?

HUB

Oh, he'll live, I was talking about the lion.

All see Walter's bruises, put two and two together.

HUB (Cont'd)

What happened... did he do that?

Hub GROWLS and grabs Stan, but Garth stops him.

GARTH

We have to get him to the hospital.
Mae, get your car. Mae! Your
car!

Mae is nearly hysterical, but she nods, rushes off.

GARTH (Cont'd)

Let's get the lion off him.

All turn over the limp lion, look down. Garth WHISTLES.

GARTH (Cont'd)

I believe this man's gonna need some stitches.

HUB

A lot of stitches.

But Walter only cares about Jasmine: he cradles the limp head of the valiant lion in his lap.

WALTER

What happened to her?

GARTH

It looks like her old heart just gave out in all the excitement. She was plenty old, you know.

WALTER

Look! She's... smiling.

They look: she does indeed look as if she's smiling.

GARTH

Well! I'd say she died happy.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: (2)

136

HUB

She died with her boots on. That's the main thing.

GARTH

Yup. Protecting her cub.

WALTER

She really was a real lion, wasn't she? There, at the end. A real jungle lion. A real Africa lion!

Hub and Garth nod. Beyond them, the cornfield rustles in the pale early morning light. DISSOLVE TO:

137 EXT. THE CORNFIELD - DAY

137

Inside the cornfield, wearing Sunday best: Walter, Hub, Garth, and the animals surround a grave-mound: they've buried the lion where she belonged, in the cornfield.

Walter SNIFFLES as he POUNDS in a wooden cross, says a silent prayer, and looks up at his uncles. Pause.

GARTH

You finish packing?

(Walter nods sadly)

Your momma's gonna be back from the hospital soon. You can wait for her on the front porch.

He nods. The uncles sadly watch him trudge to the house.

138 EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

138

Forlorn, Walter waits on the front porch, surrounded by dogs and the pig, all in the same mournful mood.

Mae's Cadillac pulls up, with a bandaged Stan the front-seat passenger. Mae exits, approaches:

MAE

So, all packed? Where's your suitcase?

WALTER

Upstairs. In my room.

MAE

Let's go get it.

139 INT./EXT. THE CADILLAC - DAY

139

Stan is a mummy, immobilized in bandages head to toe.
His eyes widen in alarm as he sees Hub and Garth approach.

GARTH

Howdy, Stan.

STAN

Mmmm! Mmmm-MMMM!

HUB

Stan, you were lucky... lucky that
lion got you before we did!

Stan's eyes grow very wide.

HUB (Cont'd)

Know they do to men who hurt kids
back in North Africa, Stan?

(Stan shakes his head)

Well! First they take a rope....

140 INT. THE TOWER ROOM - DAY

140

Walter looks around his tower room for the last time.
Outside the window, Mae sees the uncles lecture to Stan,
with a lot of descriptive hand-and-arm motions.

MAE

I wonder what your uncles are saying
to Stan?

WALTER

Probably their "What Every Boy
Needs to Know About Being A Man"
speech.

MAE

I'm glad to see they're making
friends.

Walter carefully puts his precious photo of Jasmine atop
his clothes, closes his suitcase.

MAE (Cont'd)

There now. Ready?

141 EXT. BY CADILLAC - DAY

141

HUB

...and then, after every bone in the body is broken, they take a razor sharp sword and two hundred pounds of salt....

Just getting warmed-up, Hub sees Walter and Mae approach.

HUB (Cont'd)

Oh well. To make a long story short, Stan: you and me can be friends.... or we can be enemies.

Hub gives him that look: the helpless Stan quakes. Hub SLAPS Stan hard on the back: Stan MOANS, nearly faints.

MAE

I hope Walter wasn't too much trouble.

HUB

We managed.

GARTH

(nods at Stan)

What are you gonna do about him?

HUB

Man like that's got no business being around your boy.

MAE

Oh, of course! What kind of mother would I be? We're just dropping him off in Vegas on our way....

Time to say goodbye. Garth SIGHS, Hub looks uptight, the dogs look miserable, and Walter's eyes grow wet. Pause.

WALTER

...I'll be back for the rest of that speech... if... if...

Walter stumbles. But Hub answers definitively:

HUB

I'll be here.

Walter SNIFFLES, then rushes to Hub and hugs him, low. Hub awkwardly pats him on the back. Walter turns to Garth.

(CONTINUED)

- 141 CONTINUED: 141
- WALTER
- Thanks for the stories. And everything! It meant an awful, awful lot.
- GARTH
- I'm glad.
- They hug tightly. Then Walter climbs into the car.
- 142 INT. THE CADILLAC - DAY 142
- The animals sadly press their noses against Walter's window. As the car pulls away, he starts to cry.
- 143 EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY 143
- The uncles sadly watch the Cadillac drive away.
- HUB
- Damn it! That woman don't deserve that kid! Let's get us a lawyer!
- GARTH
- No judge is gonna take a child away from its mother and give it to two old bachelor uncles.
- HUB
- Maybe she'll sell him to us! How much money we got?
- GARTH
- Hub! There's nothing we can do. He's gone!
- Hub glowers. They watch until the car is out of sight.
- 144 INT. CADILLAC - MOVING - DAY 144
- Walter looks back, watches the "WARNING" signs pass behind. The house and tower gradually fade from view.
- 145 EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY 145
- The Cadillac turns onto the highway, accelerates away.
- 146 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING - DAY 146
- All settle in. But something still bothers Walter.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

146

WALTER

Mom? It was all a lie, wasn't it?
About the uncles being bank robbers.
And you were in on it the whole
time, right?

MAE

I did what's best for us. You
want those men to come after Stan?

He looks out, sees the field of bluebonnets pass by.

WALTER

So. Where we going?

MAE

I told you. Las Vegas.

WALTER

I mean after. After we drop Stan
off.

MAE

Well now, honey, Stan's gonna need
a lot of looking after...

She reaches over and pats Stan gently on the knee.

And suddenly Walter knows everything: he GASPS.

Walter grabs the car door, opens it, sees asphalt and
grass racing past... and starts to jump.

MAE (Cont'd)

Walter!

The Caddy SWERVES violently, Mae SLAMS on the brakes,
Stan SMASHES into the windshield... and Walter jumps.

147 EXT. A RISE OVERLOOKING THE ROADWAY - DAY

147

Walter rolls to a stop, jumps to his feet, scuffed but
unhurt. He runs up a small rise overlooking the road.
Below, the Caddy backs into frame, BRAKES hard, SLAMMING
Stan backward: he YELPS.

MAE

Walter!

She jumps out, runs after him. Walter collapses in the
field of bluebonnets, and CRIES. Mae approaches:

MAE (Cont'd)

Walter! What's got into you?!

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

147

WALTER

You're still marrying him? After...
everything?

MAE

He's not so bad... a little rough
around the edges, but he can change.

WALTER

Mom!

MAE

He says he loves me and I'm not
getting any younger....

WALTER

Has he hit you yet?

MAE

Mind your own business!

Walter stares at her knowingly. She looks away.

WALTER

You always think a new boyfriend
solves everything. But you always
pick losers. And he's the worst
of 'em all.

MAE

Walter. We got no choice.

WALTER

Maybe you don't....

MAE

What?

WALTER

Mom. Do something for me. For
once. Do something that's best
for me. OK? Promise?

MAE

Well... Let's hear it.

148 INT. CADILLAC - DAY

148

Stan lays askew, face SMUSHED into the windshield; he
GROANS. He strains to look, sees Walter and Mae talking.
Then, both hug, crying. He wonders: what the hell?

149 EXT. THE UNCLE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY 149

Hub, Garth, and the animals listlessly sit on the porch in their "waiting for salesmen" places. Long pause.

GARTH

Salesmen oughta be along in two, three hours.

HUB

Whoop de do.

A dog's head goes up; so does another's. The uncles look up: far down the road, a small figure approaches, on foot. The uncles squint: who is it? The dogs run down the road, BARKING. Finally the uncles' eyes bug out: they drop their shotguns and hustle down the steps to meet...

150 WALTER 150

Walter, carrying his bag, trudges up to the uncles, sets down his bag, and smiles. All three--this new family--grin at each other. Happily, this time.

WALTER

If I'm gonna live here, there's some conditions....

HUB

CONDITIONS?

WALTER

One: you both stick around until I'm through high school at least, preferably college. You both got responsibilities now: PTA, Boy Scouts, Little League, the works.

Hub GROANS. Garth hides a smile. Finally, both nod.

HUB

Looks like we got no choice...!

WALTER

Two: you both take better care of yourselves: more vegetables, less meat.

Hub throws up his hands, storms for the house. Walter and Garth follow.

GARTH

I wonder if traveling salesmen sell school supplies...?

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

150

WALTER

Three: no dangerous stuff. No fighting teenagers, no airplanes...

HUB

Now wait one minute!

WALTER

...at least until I'm out of college. Maybe longer...

HUB

What do the hell you expect us to die of? Old age...?

Walter smiles, nods: exactly. Garth smiles at Walter.

GARTH

So Walt. Welcome home.

And Walter breaks into the biggest, sunniest smile of his entire life. So far. FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE: "Thirty years later..."

151 EXT. BIPLANE COCKPIT - FLYING - DAY

151

HUB & GARTH

YA-HOOOO!!!

Wearing goggles and helmets, two old men SCREAM like crazy kids as their SPUTTERING biplane loops and rolls.

152 EXT. LOW, ON THE GROUND - SUNSET

152

The plane flies away, barely under control: it careens and SPUTTERS off into a huge heroic sunset.

153 INT. CLUTTERED ARTIST'S STUDIO - DAY

153

The man draws at a table: he's forty, handsome, athletic, confident. He smiles a familiar smile, a smile full of grace. He's the ADULT WALT. The phone RINGS.

WALT

Hello?

Behind him are awards and drawings on a wall: a successful syndicated comic strip in the style of Calvin & Hobbes. The romantic Arabic theme PLAYS.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

153

TELEPHONE (V.O.)

Walter Caldwell...? I have bad news. It's about your two uncles. Sir, they've passed away.

A sketch: a child's lettered sign "Africa" points to a cornfield where a whimsical lion sticks out her head.

The lion and her companion, a small boy in a pith helmet explore an exotic African jungle cornfield. The strip is entitled: "Walter and Jasmine".

TELEPHONE (Cont'd)

It's a blessing they didn't suffer.

Night: by a cornfield and lake is a familiar ramshackle house, a light on at the top of its leaning tower.

TELEPHONE (Cont'd)

And a blessing too, in a way, that they went together...

A hand freezes over a drawing: the boy addresses his "troops" that include a pack of dogs, chickens, and a surly pig. The lion looks skeptical.

TELEPHONE (Cont'd)

I found their will. I'll give it to you when you get here.

Walt's face: the news he's dreaded has finally come.

154 INT. WALT'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

154

Walt drives, turns in, passes the familiar "Warning!" - signs, faded now. Ahead, the farmhouse looms, its tower leans even more. He parks beside a SHERIFF's car.

155 EXT. BY THE CARS - DAY

155

SHERIFF

Walter Caldwell?

WALT

Walt.

Walt and the Sheriff shake hands, then both turn to look at the barn: in an upper opening, the tail of the crashed biplane sticks out, upside down at a crazy angle.

Walt stifles a LAUGH. The Sheriff scratches his head.

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED:

155

SHERIFF

Best I can figure, they were trying to fly through the barn upside down.

Walt shakes his head, a LAUGH bursts out, is cut off.

WALT

I always knew that airplane would get them.

SHERIFF

We had a bunch of reporters out here earlier. Even CNN. I guess anytime a biplane from the first World War crashes, doing acrobatics, flown by two ninety year-old men with no pilots' licenses, well....

Both try to keep straight faces, finally both grin.

SHERIFF (Cont'd)

Here. I found their will.

A single piece of paper. Walt reads the scrawls:

WALT

"The kid gets it all. Just plant us in the damn garden with the stupid lion."

Walt's eyes become wet. He looks out at the garden, and the lake beyond. Wind rustles stalks of corn.

WALT (Cont'd)

These last few months, my Uncle Hub's been sick with pneumonia. From sleepwalking. More and more lately, we'd find him out there in the middle of the night, staring out over the water....

The Sheriff looks at the plane with new understanding.

SHERIFF

Well. They had a good long run, both of them. And they went out with their boots on.

Walt nods: they sure did that.

156 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY 156

The day of the funeral, in the garden: it's a real garden now, with a variety of huge, beautiful vegetables.

MOURNERS, mostly curious locals, gingerly make their way through rows of beautiful vegetables to the grave site, between the tomatoes and the watermelons.

157 THE CARS 157

WALT'S WIFE arrives. TWO BOYS bounce out of the car, dueling with curved plastic Arab swords.

WALT'S WIFE

Put the swords back in the car!

The boys turn: one wears an eye-patch and has a crayon-drawn face scar.

BOYS

Oh, mom...!

WALT'S WIFE

Go stand with your father.

158 EXT. THE GARDEN/GRAVE SITE 158

The boys run up to Walt.

BOYS

Dad! Dad!

WALT

Hub, you're standing on the squash.
Garth, lose the eyepatch.

Walt sees four prosperous-looking MEN in their fifties arrive with their wives; the four eye him, grinning.

FRANKIE

Walter? Little Walter...?

WALT

I'm sorry, I don't remember....

The four turn up collars on the suit jackets: the hoods.

WALT (Cont'd)

Frankie and the hoods! I didn't recognize you guys without your leather jackets!

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED:

158

By now, perhaps two dozen people stand among the vegetables. All wait, look at Walt expectantly.

WALT (Cont'd)

Oh. Well.... In her life, my mother made a lot of mistakes. But once, by sheer accident, she did do something right: she dumped me off one summer with two crazy old men. And there, in the most unlikely of places, I found a home. My home.

The wind blows softly, rustles the corn stalks.

WALT (Cont'd)

They had no idea of how to deal with a troubled little kid. So, they told me stories. Amazing, unbelievable stories. Stories about harems, sheiks and princesses, valiant men and evil villains. About courage. Honor. They knew those stories were exactly what a terrified young boy needed to hear.

Walt smiles wryly, shakes his head.

WALT (Cont'd)

Even though we cynical adults know such tall tales can't possibly be true, I believed them. In a way, I still believe them. Because, as my Uncle Hub taught me, just because something isn't true, that's no reason you shouldn't believe in it. That's what fathers do for sons: teach them the things that, despite everything, are worth believing in.

Some folks don't understand. But others do.

WALT (Cont'd)

It was the proudest day of my life when I turned eighteen and Hub gave me his full, unabridged, "What Every Boy Needs to Know About Being a Man" speech.

TITTERS, smiles. Frankie and the hoods nod knowingly.

WALT (Cont'd)

And one of these days, I'll give that same speech to my sons.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED: (2)

158

The two look up at their dad and grin.

WALT (Cont'd)

I really, really loved those two old characters. I'm really going to miss them....

He wipes his eyes, looks up.

WALT (Cont'd)

Please, as you leave, help yourself to all the vegetables you can carry.

LAUGHS. And it's over. All start to leave. But then:

WHOOSH! Airbrakes: two huge livestock trucks pull in.

Everyone looks puzzled. Big doors SLAM DOWN: SOLDIERS on horseback leap out, riding beautiful Arabian stallions. Foreign soldiers wearing kepis and kerchiefs, desert uniforms. Foreign Legion uniforms.

WALT'S BOYS

It's The Legion!

The Legion forms up into a mounted Honor Guard. Walt can't believe his eyes. Nor can anyone.

Then, they see another vehicle drive up: a long, long limo pulls up and parks; its doors open: a dozen ARAB WOMEN wearing veils emerge in a dense pack, surrounding someone of obvious importance. The pack approaches.

Walt's boys' eyes shine. They watch the Legion on horseback, stallions prancing in glorious precision.

And then, at the garden's edge, the pack of women parts: revealing an old, old man in a wheelchair, an ancient SHEIK who wears an eyepatch and has a long scar running down one side of his once-handsome but cruel face.

WALT'S BOYS (Cont'd)

Yikes!

Walt is startled; his sons jump behind him, and peer out:

The old sheik glares at the coffins with incredible fury. The women start WAILING mournfully; the old sheik glares at them, then shakes his fist at the two coffins.

Old enemies die hard.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED: (3)

158

The amazed locals watch as the mounted Honor Guard snaps
to attention.

*

With a stunned realization, the adult Walt is now certain
of what young Walter finally, truly believed:

BOYS

It was all true. Huh Dad?

WALT

Yes. It was all true.

And so it was.

ROMANTIC ARAB THEME UP FULL.

THE END