

Act 1

(The sound of crickets can be heard. A country roadside. JUNIOR, dressed in a Boy Scout uniform, stands under a tall tree.)

JUNIOR

(Creating pistols with his two index fingers and thumbs) BAM! Down goes Black-Eyed Bart. BAM! Down goes Indian Joe with the feather in his mother fuckin' head. BANG! BANG! BANG! One-Eyed Jack and his gang will sleep in Hell tonight under the cold harvest moon, so says Junior Sims. They say Indian Joe can track a man over bare rock. He ain't gonna be trackin' nothin' while Junior's slingin' the steel. BANG! Right between his eyes and through the back of his skull. The Cheyenne man goes down. Stone cold dead.

(TOBY is sitting under the tree with two small backpacks. He is also dressed in a Boy Scout uniform, and notably dirty. He has his hands over his eyes.)

JUNIOR

No man, no monster, no nothin' can take the quick draw of Junior Sims and his pearl-handled colts.

(TOBY stands, places his fingers at the side of his head in order to create makeshift animal horns, and begins growl and snarl at Junior then begins to move at him. JUNIOR turns, points his fingers at Toby as if to shoot him with his pretend weapons.)

JUNIOR

BANG!

(TOBY is knocked back by the fictional bullet but remains on his feet. Pretending to be the wounded animal now, TOBY begins to stagger towards Junior . Once again, JUNIOR fires another fictional bullet.)

JUNIOR

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

(TOBY pretends to be knocked back once again. In noticeably more pain, TOBY's monster stumbles for a moment in grand theatrics, then makes one last attempt to charge Junior. JUNIOR takes aim with his fingers and fires one more fictional bullet at Toby.)

TOBY

You got one bullet left, Junior Sims.

JUNIOR

Bang.

(TOBY is once again knocked backwards and for the first time, falls to the ground.)

JUNIOR

Nothing can take Junior Sims. Nothing. *(Pause)* Man, I gotta piss.

TOBY

Then go.

JUNIOR

I ain't goin' here. I ain't pissin' by no graveyard. Man that's a goocher to piss by dead people. Bad luck. My dick'll fall off. Are you gonna be pissin' by a graveyard? No way.

TOBY

That graveyard's like a thousand feet away, up hill. You ain't gonna get gooched for pissin' down from dead people.

JUNIOR

No man, I'm just holdin' it.

TOBY

You think all the deer around these parts get gooched every time they piss down hill from those tombstones? Just take a leak, nobody cares.

JUNIOR

No man, I'm just gonna hold it. It ain't right pissin' around dead people. They'll come back and haunt you. I can hold it 'til Dungy gets here.

TOBY

If he gets here. We been sittin' on our asses for at least two and half hours. *(Pointing his index finger at Junior as a makeshift pistol.)* Bang. *(Pause)* Just piss behind the tree, dummy.

JUNIOR

Don't call me dummy.

(JUNIOR walks behind the tree, unzips his shorts. TOBY takes a cigarette out of his pack, and lights it with a match. As he puffs on the cigarette he watches the match burn down to his fingers.)

TOBY

You got any food left?

JUNIOR

Don't talk. You'll make it go back up.

(JUNIOR begins to grunt, then the sound of urine hitting the ground can be heard. TOBY places his cigarette in his mouth and puts the palms of his hands over his eyes again.)

JUNIOR

You know, he probably ain't comin'. Probably got sloshed and is shootin' soup cans out of trees or fences. You know, that's how he lost his eye. He and Vince split a bottle of Old Crow, went shootin' with their twenty two's. Shattered a bottle of maple syrup and caught a piece of glass in the eye. We should probably just hoof it to town. This kind of shit never would have happened with your old man. What the Hell are you doin'?

TOBY

You know when you press on your eyes real hard, you see a bunch of swirly colors? Reds and greens and blues. Yellows if you squint. And if you press hard enough for long enough you start to see through your hands. Like you're burnin' through them, but you can't feel it. Like you're shootin' holes through your fingers. You can see all kinds of colors. Colors and shapes. We ain't walkin' to town. It's over twenty-five miles. We best just stay here. You want a Lucky? I got two left.

JUNIOR

Sure.

TOBY

(Removing his hands from his eyes.) Top pocket. You got any food?

JUNIOR

(Lighting a cigarette.) No.

TOBY

That makes two of us. I'm gettin' hungry. Dungy'll be here. He'll be here soon. He's always a little late.

(TOBY goes to his pack and removes a pocket knife and a stick. He sits down by the tree and begins to carve at it.)

JUNIOR

Yeah. Sure. He'll get here. Wasted. Dancin' on his toes. He'll come ridin' in on a black horse...the old man'll come ridin' up the road with the whole God Damned nine to five shift at the plant, with pitchforks and torches. Comin' to take our souls down to the deepest, darkest corners of Hell and damnation. Yee-Ha!

(JUNIOR creates pistols from his fingers once again.)

JUNIOR

But they'll never take me. YOU'LL NEVER TAKE ME! BANG! BANG! BANG! Junior Sims will always ride a free man! Damn you, old man, you dirty fuckin' dog! I ain't goin' down that way! I am as quick with the steel as the Sundance Kid, and twice as mean-tempered! BANG! BANG! BANG! Fucker!

TOBY

(Raising his knife into the air.) And the Switch Blade Kid will cut your old drunken throat like the chicken fucker you are, old man! Yippy-ky-ay!

JUNIOR

BANG! BANG! BANG! Chicken fucker. You know, if I ever get the chance...I'll blow his good eye out. Make him blind. Bang. No-Eyed Jack.

TOBY

Don't talk about your old man like that.

JUNIOR

Like what, Toby?

(JUNIOR climbs into the tree and sits on one of the branches.)

JUNIOR

Hey. Hey, man...

TOBY

It's all good.

JUNIOR

Naw, man...

TOBY

No. Really. It's all good. What are you gonna do tonight?

JUNIOR

Take a shower. Flip through a Hustler. Watch some tube. Have a few Buds. Why? You wanna do somethin'?

TOBY

I don't know. Maybe. I need to see mom. She gets lonely on the weekends. Cook her dinner. She likes it when I read to her. We're in the middle of the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe and she wants me to finish it.

JUNIOR

What?

TOBY

Nothin'. You know when the Clint Eastwood marathon is on?

JUNIOR

It ain't on 'til next weekend.

TOBY

Naw, it's on tonight.

JUNIOR

You one hundred percent positive?

TOBY

I'm seventy nine percent sure it's on tonight.

JUNIOR

Seventy nine, fuck you. I know my stuff, Toby. It's on next weekend. Eight o'clock. Eastern Standard Time. Pale Rider. Outlaw Josey Wales. The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly. Wales, the only one of the three he don't play a man with no name. You wanna come over? We'll make it into a theme party. We'll get some Taco Bell and some Old El Paso. Or just a plain old can of beans, cook 'em on the stove, in the can, just the way Clint would. Do shots of prairie fire at the end of each movie, in honor of the man, or at every commercial break.

TOBY

Oh, Jesus, man.

JUNIOR

Come on! Get good and sloppy. Live like men. And we'll get some cigars! You know those thin ones that are all broken up at the end, just like the kind Clint smokes, and we'll light 'em with Dungy's blow torch!

TOBY

Last time I did prairie fire I was sick for three days. That crap gets into your bones. I was shittin' blood the next day. Burns. I hate it. The tequila gets in my system and I'm hung over for days.

JUNIOR

No you ain't, you pussy.

TOBY

Screw you I ain't. Get dizzy and light headed and throwin' up and I always get that pain up the left side of my stomach. Throwin' up 'til my throat hurts. Always throwin' up blood and everything I ate that day. Get that metal taste in my mouth.

JUNIOR

Like pussy.

TOBY

Yeah, J. Like pussy. Like you'd know what pussy tastes like. You know, I got so messed up last time, I got stuck in the screen door. Still haven't figured that one out yet. Just remember Mrs. Phillips threatening to tell my mom. Man, I ain't doin' no prairie fire, just beer. Maybe beer. I ain't doin' no prairie fire, that's for sure. That shit's like gasoline.

JUNIOR

You're just a wuss. You always get sick 'cause we always shoot white tequila. White tequila is bad for you. I read it in Playboy. We'll use gold this time. Come on, man. We never do stuff anymore.

TOBY

We go camping every month. We just went caving for the past three days.

JUNIOR

That's not what I'm talkin' about. I'm talkin' about stuff. This ain't stuff. We never hang out anymore and do stuff.

TOBY

I'm gettin' too old to get into trouble. Anyway, I don't like leavin' my mom alone on the weekends, you know that. Look, why don't you come over and watch the marathon at my place?

JUNIOR

Dude! With your mother? What are we gonna drink? Pepsi? Wild Cherry Pepsi? I ain't gettin' tanked in front your mother. That's just sick!

TOBY

She goes to bed by nine...

JUNIOR

(Interrupting) Your mother hits the sack at nine o'clock on Saturdays? Who in the Hell goes to bed at nine? On a Saturday! Jesus, my grandparents don't even go to bed by nine...on Tuesday!

TOBY

She goes to bed by nine every night! She works hard on her feet all day! You would know! You can't keep a job at Dairy Queen! Scoopin' ice cream and flippin' burgers! What the Hell do you know about workin'? You can get ripped when she goes to sleep, you can wait, you ain't gonna keel over and die if you don't have a Bud before nine. Look, I'll even buy a pizza and pay for it myself. Free pizza and Bud, or Keystone or prairie fires or whatever the fuck you want! (Pause) I don't want you watchin' alone. Mom would love to see you. She asks about you. You're like family to her.

JUNIOR

Yeah, well you ain't got much of a family, Toby.

TOBY

It would be nice for you to come over. Just do it for me. You'll have a good time. I promise. We'll go prowling later, just like we used to.

JUNIOR

I ain't drinkin' Keystone. Your taste in beer sucks.

TOBY

I'll try to get some Bud, or fancy beer. Anyways Keystone's not that bad if you put a dash of salt in it.

JUNIOR

Whatever. I'll bring the prairie fire. Bribe Dungy to buy us somethin' nice. Cuervo. Tell him I'll paint the garage again. Hey.

TOBY

It's all good.

JUNIOR

No. Really. I mean your mom...

TOBY

Dude. Don't. It's all good. *(Pause)* J...you know the Mexican girl? The one that sits behind Zach Thomas in geometry.

JUNIOR

Yeah.

TOBY

When we go prowlin', I want to tag by her house. You remember that old construction site by the Dairy Queen? The one with the big square cinder blocks that looked like flowers.

JUNIOR

Yeah. We used to cram empty beer cans in those cinder blocks. Play around all night in that construction site. That's the stuff we don't do anymore.

TOBY

That's her new house. The white one with the blue window sills and the red front door. Do you know her name?

JUNIOR

I could care less.

TOBY

Angelina. Bet you dollars to donuts it means Angel.

JUNIOR

Considering the factoid that we are sitting a graveyard, I shall make a note of that. I really don't want to hear about your spick, Toby. I'm more concerned about the vultures over head?

(JUNIOR *jumps out of the tree.*)

JUNIOR

(*Creating a pistol with his hand.*) BANG! I'll shoot you dead. Save the vultures some time.

TOBY

Shut up. I'm sure the highway's jammed. Always is this time of day.

JUNIOR

Bullshit. The highway ain't jammed. It's Sunday, people are still at church and watchin' football. I fuckin' hate him.

TOBY

Hey, I'm thinkin' about buyin' a wolf cub. You wanna get with me on that idea?

JUNIOR

What idea? Where in the Hell are you gonna find a wolf cub?

TOBY

Don't get shitty with me. There are wolves all over the damned place.

JUNIOR

Where? Transylvania?

TOBY

You can buy them out of the back of Field and Stream. Any jackass worth his salt knows that. I want to get a wolf cub, I think I deserve a wolf cub for puttin' up with half the crap you dish out, you dumb white trash...

JUNIOR

Whatever! Whatever!

TOBY

Wolves are cool. Wolves are damn cool. I know you think wolves are cool, don't act like you don't. They're better than normal dogs. Bigger. Badder. Longer teeth. They got more

(TOBY *cont.*)

authority. A Hell of a lot more attitude. That's why the NC State mascot is called "the wolf pack," not the "dog pack."

JUNIOR

Where do you come up with this crap? Keystones beer. Wolf cub. Seriously. I think you need to see a mental health specialists, Toby.

TOBY

Oh, shut up. Just shut up! I know you think it's a cool idea, you're just jealous you didn't come up with it first. That's why I want to know if you wanna get together on it. Not the kind of animal you want to play frizbee with, the kind of dog you want to go duck hunting with, an animal that will retrieve what you have put down.

JUNIOR

Where are you gonna keep this wolf cub? In the bathtub? You live in a two-bedroom apartment, you ain't even got the space for a goldfish, let alone a wolf cub. Jesus, you do know they call wolf cubs" because they aren't full grown. What's your master plan when this animal gets too big? They ain't like German Shepards', wolves are nocturnal hunters. They need to track things down. How the Hell you gonna go duck hunting at night, let alone do a damned thing with your super cool big bad ass wolf? Run around your duplex and scare the shit out of the elderly? Give me a break! That's the stupidest idea you've ever generated.

TOBY

You grab any animal, ANY animal at an early enough age, you CAN domesticate 'em. You think Siegfried and Roy just head out to the jungle and grab the first tiger they see? It takes time and discipline to domesticate an animal. Swiss Family Robinson! They got themselves all kinds of animals. Tigers, elephants, ostriches, zebras...

JUNIOR

The Swiss Family Robinson is a movie!

TOBY

It's a book! It was a book before it was a movie, you'd know that if you weren't so stupid for five fuckin' minutes, and you'd KNOW you can domesticate any animal if you get a hold of 'em at an early age! Damn, you're a dumb shit!

JUNIOR

Don't call me a dumb shit!

TOBY

Dumb shit!

JUNIOR

(Interrupting) I said don't call me a dumb shit! *(Silence.)* Wolf Cub. Yeah. *(Silence.)* Shit. *(Silence.)* So. How much this wolf gonna cost us?

TOBY

Don't know.

JUNIOR

It's a good idea. Wolves are real cool animals. We gotta keep him away from the train tracks. Wolf cub breaks loose, crawls up on the train tracks, he ain't gonna know a freight car from a hole in the wall. Remember that beagle we found?

TOBY

Beagles have small legs. Probably couldn't get off the tracks in time.

JUNIOR

Still, you gotta keep a wolf cub under lock and key.

TOBY

I know.

JUNIOR

You think your mom'll mind?

TOBY

I'll just tell her it's a dog.

(JUNIOR walks to the tree, takes a hold of a branch and begins to do pull ups, slowly.)

JUNIOR

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10. *(Pause)* 1..2..3..4..5..6..7..8..9..10. *(Pause)* 1,2..3...4. What do you see in the girl?

TOBY

What girl?

JUNIOR

The spick.

TOBY

You know what Mark Rypkin calls her? Sand nigger.

JUNIOR

Rypkin just repeats everything his old man says.

TOBY

I don't like sand nigger. Sounds wrong.

JUNIOR

Rypkin was tellin' me he was smackin' it with strawberry flavored super slime. Said it felt like a real puss. Like he would know.

TOBY

He's always shootin' his mouth off.

JUNIOR

Dungy hates his old man.

TOBY

Mark was the one that started that rumor about Mr. Manning doin' that girl on the swim team. Got him fired.

JUNIOR

Mark still has a point about the spic. I mean this is our country, our school. Our place. Her daddy puts our gas in his car. She puts our food in her mouth. She uses our books at our school and you know she's makin' them dirty with her Mexican fingers. I won't use the water fountain after the fuckin' spic.

TOBY

Yeah, well her teeth are straight.

JUNIOR

Really. Good for her. I'm gonna get braces when the old man's dental plan kicks in.

TOBY

Whatever. You're dumb, Junior.

JUNIOR

Don't call me dumb, Toby.

TOBY

You're stupid, then.

JUNIOR

Go fuck yourself.

TOBY

What do you got against the girl. She ain't bothering you. She doesn't talk to nobody.

JUNIOR

She's takin' up my space! Why are we talkin' about this?

TOBY

You don't think she's hot?

JUNIOR

Oh, God. You like her? You like her, don't you? I noticed you haven't been talkin' about Cindy Cooper so much. This all makes perfect sense. You want some southern comfort? Some wet back? I bet her pussy tastes like a taco. "If you touch me hear, you will know the woman that I am. My name is Angelina, but you can call me Tamale Bitch."

TOBY

You are so ignorant.

JUNIOR

Look at you! You like her, you're gettin' all defensive and chewin' you fingers. You're tryin' to think of somethin' clever to shoot back at me, but you're too busy thinkin' about the wetback, aren't you Tob-o-reno? My amigo, you have been demoted from geek, to loser.

TOBY

Fuck you.

JUNIOR

Ah! Yes! The four letter comeback from mummies honor student. Captain of the mathelettes.

(Silence.)

JUNIOR

Hey. Hey, man...

TOBY

Don't. O.k.

JUNIOR

No, man. I crossed a line.

TOBY

It's all good. Junior.

JUNIOR

You're still a geek. Do you think she watches reruns of The Flintstones in español?

TOBY

The Jetsons.

JUNIOR

The Jetsons are an American thing. American looking dog, American flying cars. She probably watches, um...what's his name....Speedy Gonzalez.

TOBY

I wonder what kind of music she listens to. I wonder if she likes John Mellencamp.

JUNIOR

Oh, who the fuck really likes Mellencamp?

TOBY

My old man used to play John Mellencamp for mom.

JUNIOR

Yeah, but your dad listened to good shit too.

TOBY

I would pretend to go to sleep at 8:30 and sneak back downstairs around nine because they would always be dancin', you could hear mom laugh and dad get all drunk off the wine in a box. Every night. They used to listen to John Cougar Mellencamp and dad would put on his black and white dancing shoes and wrap his fingers around mom's hips and dance real slow, whispering things in her ear. The old man would say something in mom's ear and she always laughed, you know, the way she laughs. Puts her hand over her mouth to hide the fact she was laughin'. Like a little schoolgirl. He used to bring home Greek food every Friday night, or maybe it was Thursday, maybe, because it was my mom's favorite. She used to yell at him though. "JACK! You're gonna make the whole house stink with garlic!" Then she'd kiss him underneath his earlobe.

JUNIOR

Would you shut up? Would you please shut up? Would you please shut up? Christ, I'm gonna vomit on my hikin' boots. I don't want to hear all this crap about your old man. Don't tell me you want to listen to JCM with the Mexican girl. Man, you are so predictable.

TOBY

Mellencamp is cool. A glass of fancy wine, some good food.

JUNIOR

God, you are serious. I've never heard you talk so much in my entire life. You think she'd like Greek food? She's from Mexico. What's wrong with Cindy?

TOBY

I don't like Cindy. You are the one that wants me to like Cindy because you are to chicken shit to ask her out.

JUNIOR

Your mom know about this Mexican, fuck a duck, your mom know you used to sneak out of bed to watch 'em dance?

TOBY

Yeah. I used to fall asleep on the stairs watchin' 'em. I always woke up in my bed the next day.

JUNIOR

Man! Dungy would've clipped my fingers off if he knew I was spyin' on him. Actually, I don't think he gives two shits what the Hell I do anymore. Just keep my mits off his Old Crow. I could drink piss and gasoline for all he cares.

TOBY

Her name's Angelina.

JUNIOR

Yeah, that's real nice, Toby. I don't see how you can be interested in a girl that puts her hair up in a pony tail with no ribbons. No nothin' for that matter. No bows, no ribbons, no Hello Kitty clips, no nothin', just a rubberband. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I've seen her too. Sure as shit don't see what you see, but I've noticed her. Looks like she fell off a boxcar. Even Sara Coolidge puts ribbons in her hair.

TOBY

Just because she's not licked across the cover of a Hustler don't make her ugly. You wouldn't know anyway, all your Hustlers stick together.

JUNIOR

I found 'em that way.

TOBY

Oh, really? Like the one you lifted from Short Stop? Or the one you lifted from seven-eleven, Dungy? Or the one with the girl covered in chocolate sauce, with the whipped cream and cherries on her titties? I am assuming that's whipped cream, young Mr. Dungy.

JUNIOR

Don't call me that!

TOBY

Dungy.

JUNIOR

Fuck you!

TOBY

Dungy.

JUNIOR

Stop it!

(Silence.)

TOBY

Don't call her sand nigger, Dungy. *(Pause)* Hey.

JUNIOR

Go fuck yourself, brain boy.

(Silence.)

TOBY

I've been thinkin'. I've been thinkin' we could build a dog house for the wolf. Out of beer bottles. I'm figuring the wolf has thicker fur than your average dog. We'd need some brown longnecks. Keep the sun out. Get some old Bud longnecks. Some 'Blue Ribbon bottles. Get that stuff people use to put together stained glass pictures. To keep it together. You know. I figure, if you're gonna have a pet with attitude, his house should be bad ass and cool. I bet old Dungy is gettin' pretty sloppy right about now. Maybe we should think about walkin' it.

JUNIOR

It's twenty miles. Twenty-five. At least. Dungy was gettin' sloppy for breakfast. I'm sure he's a mess right now. He was takin' me out to be his D.D. a few times last week, but that was interfering with my studies so I told him to stick it. I just wish he'd wrap that truck around a tree. I like that dog house idea. You're always comin' up with original ideas. Still don't see why you're buggin' me about that Mexican. You wanna build a dog house for her too. How can you communicate? You don't even talk Spanish.

TOBY

She says hello to me in the hallway. Everyday.

JUNIOR

That's because it's the only English she knows. Her old man came here to move the Coca Cola plant south. You know that?

TOBY

Who told you that? Dusty Ziggler, said it didn't he? Him and Mark.

JUNIOR

Doesn't mean two shits who I heard it from, it's true and you know it's true, and you're trickin' yourself if you say it ain't true. That's why the Mexicans come up here. Everybody knows they're closin' the plant and movin' it south. It's simple economics. Mexican laws are loose. You can make kids work until three A.M. And you don't have to pay 'em two dollars an hour. On top of that, you can make a Mexican work on the fourth of July and Thanksgivin' and shit, 'cause those ain't mandatory holidays down there. Hell, the only day you can't touch in Mexico is Christmas, but that's true every place on earth except China. Dirty fuckin' Mexicans would steal the Taco Bell if they got a fair shot. They can't help it. It's in their DNA. Can't trust 'em. And if you believe for one minute Davy Crockett lost his life at the Alamo, you're an asshole.

TOBY

Dude, Davy Crockett died at the Alamo.

JUNIOR

No, that's Mexican propaganda, that's what they want you to believe.

TOBY

Davy Crockett was shot dead at the east wall.

JUNIOR

Davy Crockett died in a hospital bed, in Denver, Colorado, of tuberculosis, playin' cards and winnin' every hand.

TOBY

That was Doc Holiday, you ignorant hick! Crockett took it at the Alamo. The man only had flint lock muskets. How the Hell could he have gotten away from Mexican solders on horseback? You tell me how Davy Fuckin' Crockett escaped?

(JUNIOR rises and moves to his pack. He pulls out a handgun and points it at Toby.)

JUNIOR

Davy Crockett wouldn't have to run if he had one of these.

(Silence.)

TOBY

Dude, is it real?

JUNIOR

Fuck yes. It's real. It's a real weapon. It's mine. Gringos call weapons guns because they don't know what else to call them. Don't be a gringo, Toby, and if you call me a dumb shit, I'll put you down! I'm tired of you acting like you know every fuckin' thing under the sun, and I'm tired of you yelling at me all the time, and I'm sick and fuckin' tired of you bad mouthin' Davy Crockett. I'm my own man, Toby. Six bullets. I'm six times the man you are.

TOBY

Where'd you get the weapon, Junior?

JUNIOR

Snagged it off the old man's dresser when he was passed out.

TOBY

You been carryin' it all weekend.

JUNIOR

I've been carryin' it for the past two weeks.

TOBY

In school?

JUNIOR

I said I've been carryin' it for the past two weeks. Dumb shit. Yes, in school! I suppose this is where you yell at me. Right? Isn't that what you do? Yell at me when I've done something you don't approve of? Pretend you're the big bad answer man. The big man that's two weeks younger than me. You ain't my old man, I know you get off on the idea of actin' like an old man, but you ain't my old man.

TOBY

I don't always yell at you.

JUNIOR

Like fuck you don't. Of course you don't mean to yell. It just comes naturally. "Get to school, Junior! You gotta eat better, Junior! You gotta do your homework, Junior! Fuck you, Junior!" You ain't my old man, Toby. I'm sick of it! I'm fuckin' sick of it!

TOBY

Can I see the gun?

JUNIOR

Why? You tired of yelling at me? You wanna just gun me down so you can save your breath?

(JUNIOR *points the weapon to his temple. Silence. He then lets it drop to his side again.*)

TOBY

Don't ever do that again.

JUNIOR

What do you know about guns anyways?

TOBY

Enough.

JUNIOR

Oh, do you now? Do you now, Switch Blade Son? Flippin' eggs for your mommy all morning, excuse me, Huevos. Isn't that what she calls 'em? The Mexicans. They like to call eggs Huevos down there. I've noticed Angelina likes to speak Mexican in the morning lunch line, for breakfast. I always stand behind her. You can smell her. She washes her hair everyday, you can tell. It's shiny and smells like a girl's shampoo. She always wears the same lime green rubber band in her hair. No Hello Kitty clips. Not like Sara Coolidge. No barrettes. She never wears nothin'. She always gets the calcium-enriched orange juice, two Huevos, and toast. She sits by the far window, the one with the stained glass cougar. She always puts butter and strawberry jam on her toast. And she always smiles at you in the hallway, but she never says a damn thing to me. Bigot. Bang. What's Mexican for toast? She looks like the girl in Pale Rider, I bet you already noticed that. The one that falls in love with Clint Eastwood with the soft black hair, the one that calls him preacher. The one he rescues from the miners. But he rides off alone, in the end.

TOBY

She's alone too. At the end of Pale Rider.

JUNIOR

No. No, she's got her family. He ain't got no family. He just rides off, on the pale horse into the mountains. By himself. Alone. You know the best part about that movie? At the end. When he's killin' all the bad guys. One by one. That's damn cool, ain't it. The way he's hidin' in boxes and around corners during the last shoot out. Pops that guy from the Untouchables clean between the eyes. Bang. You know, he never gets gimmicky in Pale Rider. He just lays it all out. White horse. No name. Rides into town and rescues every man, woman, and child, and murders the bad guys. Doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, does it all by the book. And takes nothin' in return. That's the way a man's supposed to act. He's a real humanitarian in that one.

TOBY

What are you gonna do with the gun?

JUNIOR

Protect. Serve. You know God damned Dungy ain't gonna show anytime soon. I'll just pop his drunk ass when he does anyhow. You'll be my witness. Do you love her. And don't lie to me. You always look at the ground when you lie.

TOBY

How long you gonna be holdin' that gun?

JUNIOR

Does this make you uncomfortable?

TOBY

What do you think, jackass! You think pissin' down hill of a graveyard is a goocher, how about holdin' a loaded gun, WEAPON, excuse me!

(JUNIOR stands up and walks half the distance between himself and Toby. Silence. He then lays the gun on the ground between them. Then, goes back to spot.)

TOBY

I like it when we play, when we act like gunslingers. Like real men. It makes me feel like you and me have real lives. No school. No crap. Like we are free men riding the open plain. Ridin' from town to town, watering hole to watering hole. Rightin' all the wrongs and fighting off all the women. 'Cause the all want to have a dance with Junior Sims and the Switch Blade Son. And we gotta sneak out of town just after midnight to accommodate all the ladies in the next town. That's the way my Dad had it. You could hear him sneak out in the middle of the night, usually around two or three A.M. Get home about five-thirty, right before mom got up so she wouldn't know he was gone. One time she caught him sneakin' back in, through the bathroom window 'cause the front door was so heavy it used to grind and squeak when you'd open it. You remember? The night mom caught him, he blew it all off, said he couldn't sleep and went for an evening walk through the neighborhood. But she knew. Everybody knew. Some high school girl on the west side of town. I think she lived over by the drive-in movie they turned into the putt-putt last Labor Day. He used to walk the distance too, never took the car. That's eight miles. Four there. Four back. Would always come home tanked to the gills too. One night, one night, I caught him, on his way out. He was wearin' his dancin' shoes, the black and white ones he used to wear when would dance with mom and a red a blue shirt with palm trees on the back. I wasn't gonna let him lie to mom. Mom deserves to be treated right. I was gonna stand up and be a man. He looked me clean in the eye, and told me to put my shoes on 'cause he wanted to show me somethin'. I get my duds on, and we start walkin' but we go walkin' east, not west, so I start thinkin' he's got more than two women, which wouldn't surprise the Hell out of me, 'cause I just found out the old man's a dirty fuckin' liar.

JUNIOR

Don't talk about your old man like that.

TOBY

Junior, you do a lot of talking, it's my turn to talk. We walk past the K-Mart. And Nissan dealership by the mall. And we go into the Seven-Eleven and he gets us a pocket-sized bottle of Wild Irish Rose. Two dollar and fifty cents. He opens the bottle in the parking lot, drinks half of it in one swig, hands the bottle to me and says, "Get to work T. The night's young." So we start walkin' east again, and I start sippin' and I'm doin' my God damndest to make sure the old man doesn't see me squint. The moon was shining down on us like a street lamp, it was so bright you could read street signs off the light, white letters on green, and we got to the outskirts of town where it starts turnin' into corn field, just past the radio station tower, and we cross this dirt road, and climbed over a barbed wire fence, and the whole time he's just tellin' me bullshit stories of when he was a kid, what crazy shit he and my uncle would do. Get into sword fights with cardboard wrapping paper rolls, and steal cigarettes, and cut all the neighborhood dogs loose, and we keep walkin' and we get to this leafless dead tree. It was hollow in the middle and filled with empty beer cans, and whiskey bottles and wadded up McDonald's wrappers. He pointed up at this long, thick branch and said, "That's the branch your grandfather killed himself on. Tied his belt around his neck and hung himself. When he started shittin' blood." Then, the old man looked me clean in the eye and said, "You know I'm real proud of you. You're mother is real proud of your grads and all, but you best start livin' before it's gone. L-I-V-I-N'. Livin'."

JUNIOR

Livin'.

TOBY

Two weeks later the old man died. He never told nobody he was sick. Not even mom.

JUNIOR

I know.

TOBY

Mom still plays his Bruce Springsteen records when I'm not home, Springsteen and Melloncamp. She thinks I don't know, but she always forgets to put the records up when she's done.

(Silence.)

JUNIOR

I've been thinkin' I need a new nickname. Like the Steel Slingin' Kid, or somethin'. Your nickname's good, but...what do you think? About me gettin' a new nickname.

TOBY

Whatever makes you happy, Junior.

(Lights fade.)

Act 2

(Night time. The sound of crickets can be heard. The moon is full. JUNIOR is standing against the tree looking at the stars. TOBY is sitting in the exact same spot that he was at the end of the previous scene. Toby has his hands against his eyes. The gun is still located in the middle of the stage where it was at the end of the previous Act.)

JUNIOR

Junior Sims sits on the cold, dusty ground, and watches the stars shine above his hat. All is still. Nothing is to fear. Junior protects all.

(TOBY rises to create a monster and charges at his friend.)

JUNIOR

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

TOBY

You got one bullet left, little man!

JUNIOR

BANG!

(TOBY falls to the ground.)

JUNIOR

I had the dream again last night. The one where everybody in town's being taken over by the invisible force. It's an us against them kind of thing. The invisible force is slowly takin' everybody in town, and you and I start runnin'. You say, "Follow me." And I follow. We run through downtown. Past the sports store, past the Pizza Hut, past the K-Mart and up the big hill on the east side of town, and everyone we're passin' slowly turns to come after us. But nobody's runnin' after us, they just walk, in rhythm, like zombies. Mr. McAlister. Zach Thomas. Dusty Ziggler. Stacy Tomczeh. And when we get to the top of the hill, we're trapped. We have no place to go. And I look down the hill, all around us, and I turn to you and ask what we ought to do. Just a wall of people. And that's when I realize, I've been tricked. You're one of them. You lead me square into a trap. I can tell, because I can see it in your eyes. You got me.

TOBY

Invasion of the body snatchers.

JUNIOR

Yeah, sort of, just that you rat me out. That's the third time this week I've had that dream.

TOBY

It'll stop. When you're younger you have more reoccurring dreams. You know I wouldn't do that. Right?

JUNIOR

Of course you wouldn't, but you ain't got a choice, you're under the influence of the invisible force. The "Thing." You're in no pain, though. Just blank, like a Robby the robot. You ever have dreams like that about me?

TOBY

Never.

JUNIOR

Oh, I bet you do. I'm sure of it. Dreams where I double cross you. You just don't remember them in the morning. Shit, it's gettin' late. I'm starved.

TOBY

If Dungy ever gets here, I say we eat him.

JUNIOR

He probably tastes like pig. Actually, he probably tastes like whiskey. You got any smokes left?

TOBY

One. I'll split it with you.

JUNIOR

Deal.

(TOBY goes through his bag, gets the remaining cigarette, lights it, takes a puff and hands it JUNIOR. Each takes a puff and hands it to the other until the cigarette is spent.)

JUNIOR

Winter's comin'.

TOBY

Yeah.

JUNIOR

That means the winter dance'll be comin' up soon.

TOBY

So.

JUNIOR

You goin'?

TOBY

Don't know. Maybe. Haven't thought that much about it. You goin'?

JUNIOR

Haven't thought that much about it. It really ain't my kind of thing.

TOBY

Ain't my kind of thing either.

JUNIOR

You gotta bring a date.

TOBY

Don't think you have to bring a date.

JUNIOR

Yeah, but you look pretty stupid if you don't, I mean, everybody comes with a date. It's a dance. Who you gonna dance with if you don't come with somebody, it's simple math, you know. You gotta ask a girl to the dance, I mean, I've never been, but it's common knowledge you gotta bring a girl, or if you're Jamie Martin a guy, but that's a whole other can of worms right there that I ain't in the condition to be talkin', bein' on an empty stomach and all, little fairy. Not that there's anything wrong with that, just gotta do your own thing. Anyways, I really don't think Jamie is gay, just 'cause he got a chubby in gym class during the whole water polo unit. You know, it happens to the best of us.

TOBY

Poor Jamie.

JUNIOR

Yeah. Poor Jamie. Jamies a guy you want in your corner when the shit goes down.

TOBY

He ain't gonna rat nobody out.

JUNIOR

Point is, I don't remember the point. I don't know if I'm goin'. You gotta get dressed up and shit, and I hate that crap with a passion.

TOBY

I hear that.

JUNIOR

I mean, I've never even worn a tux before.

TOBY

I wore one for my cousin's wedding last year. They're really fuckin' hot. Real uncomfortable.

JUNIOR

Did you rent it?

TOBY

Yeah. Had this little Mickey Mouse bow tie, kind of cool.

JUNIOR

Mickey Mouse doesn't wear a bow tie.

TOBY

No, I mean little Mickey Mouses on the bow tie.

JUNIOR

Oh, that makes sense. I bet that was cool.

TOBY

Yeah. It was real cool. So. If you decided to go, you know, who you gonna ask?

JUNIOR

You mean to the dance?

TOBY

Oh. Is that what we are talking about, amigo?

JUNIOR

I don't know? What are we talking about? There aren't a lot of hot chicks in school.

TOBY

No, not really.

JUNIOR

Most of them are dogs.

TOBY

Yeah, kind of. Jill Sturdevant is pretty hot.

JUNIOR

Yeah, she's got action, but she's a cheerleader. She'll be goin' with a jock.

TOBY

Probably. Probably Kevin Hardy. Everyone likes him.

JUNIOR

You're gonna ask the wetback, aren't you?

TOBY

I hadn't thought much about it.

JUNIOR

You're lookin' at the ground. Weave your web of lies, Toby. It's a stupid idea, anyway. Mexican girls dance different than normal people. You probably just get laughed at. That smoke was good.

TOBY

Yeah, Lucky's are the best. Can I see the gun.

JUNIOR

No. It's my gun.

TOBY

Is the cylinder full?

JUNIOR

What do you think?

TOBY

I'm just asking. What kind of gun is it?

JUNIOR

Colt.

TOBY

It looks cool in the moonlight.

JUNIOR

Yeah. The old man cleaned it every Sunday when mom used to go to church. Bang. You know Dwayne Eaton?

TOBY

Big guy. Year older than us. Got held back a few grades in elementary school. Plays varsity football. Drives the olive green Chevy. Real big mother fucker.

JUNIOR

I've got English with him. You know, he's just a king-sized bully. Picks on people smaller than him 'cause he knows if he picked on anybody half his own size they'd probably smack him to the ground. I'm just tired of his shit. You know? He's always

(JUNIOR *cont.*)

pushin' people around, pushin' people into lockers. Callin' them names, and there ain't nothin' nobody can do, he's bigger than the fuckin' teachers.

TOBY

Is he givin' you shit?

JUNIOR

No, he usually just leaves me be. But, he's just such a fuckin' asshole. Always talkin' about the size of his johnson and how he's gonna do all the girls in school doggy style.

TOBY

He probably practices on cocker spaniels.

JUNIOR

He calls the Mexican "el Cunt." To her face. I mean callin' her sand nigger is one thing, but callin' her cunt...I figured, what would Clint do? In Pale Rider, he comes in and saves everybody. You know. By the book. A real hero. A real man.

TOBY

You gonna kill Dwayne ? Dwayne Eaton is a big fat fuckin' prick. All bark, no bite. He really ain't somebody you want to waste bullets on.

JUNIOR

Well, I haven't done it yet. He's still walkin' the earth. I shoot to kill. Like Clint. People will know when I shoot. I'm really just waitin' for Dungy. I'm gonna put him out of my misery.

TOBY

You got English class with Angelina. Don't you.

JUNIOR

What the Hell does that matter. She can't speak it. Would you get your mind off the wetback for uno memento.

TOBY

Can I see the colt?

JUNIOR

No. It's mine. Jesus Christ, you got a one-track mind. When you eat, do you think, "Chew?"

TOBY

Dwayne Eaton been pickin' on the her?

JUNIOR

Dude, she's not American. Everybody picks on her.

TOBY

What's your point?

JUNIOR

You know her old man is takin' the coke plant south.

TOBY

Yeah, whatever.

JUNIOR

It's true. Dwayne's mother is a bottler. You know that, right? He told her...he was gonna fuck 'er in the ass...in front of her parents...over the hood of his truck...just like the way her old man's fuckin' his mom. Doesn't matter. She can't understand a filthy fuckin' word he says. I just think there's ways you treat ladies. You know? Mexican or normal, she's still a lady. I don't approve of the way he treats her. You know, she can't understand English, but she can understand his tone.

TOBY

Saw Dwayne get into that big fight last Friday. Out on the football field. Took that kid by the ears, like handlebars, slammed his head into the ground 'til they pulled him off. There was blood all over the white chalk on the thirty yard line.

JUNIOR

I heard about that. He grabbed the new kid, from Clarenceville.

TOBY

Yeah. It was grizzly, I'll tell you that. They have to wire that kid's mouth shut. Dwayne messed him up real bad. Kept screamin', "Who's the king now?" Over, and over, and over, and over again. Poor kid never had a chance. Where the head goes, the body will follow. I was on the other side of the field and I still heard that kid's nose split.

JUNIOR

He ain't human. He's an animal.

TOBY

The sprinkler system came on. The kid from clarenceville layed there, in the blood and grass and chalk stripes with water tricklin' down on his face, or what was left of it. Even when the field started to soften up from the sprinklers, you could still hear that kid's head hit the ground, over and over, and over again. Bang. Bang. Bang. "Who's the king now?" The tone in Dwayne's voice. "Who's the king now, bitch?" Nobody would get near that kid to help him.

JUNIOR

It's like Pale Rider with the minors. Clint has got to walk in there and save everybody.

TOBY

Yeah. That's true. You know how to get the safety off?

JUNIOR

I can get the safety off. I know more about guns than you do.

(JUNIOR *points the gun at Toby*)

TOBY

Don't point it at me.

JUNIOR

I'm a crack shot. I snatched some of my cousins Barbie dolls and lined 'em all up at thirty paces. Bang. Down goes Bedtime Barbie. Bang. Down goes Movie Date Ken. I blew Malibu Barbies head clean off her shoulders. Bullet went through one little Barbie ear and out the other.

TOBY

You kill Skipper?

JUNIOR

Who's Skipper?

TOBY

She's Barbie little friend, but with brown hair.

JUNIOR

Wetback Barbie?

TOBY

Yeah.

JUNIOR

No. I haven't shot her yet. I needed a more realistic target so I took my Playboy with Anna Nichol Smith, pinned the centerfold to the walnut tree in the feild behind the Thirty One Flavors. Two shots. One in each nip.

TOBY

I'm sure it helps to have a more realistic target.

JUNIOR

I'm tellin' you, Junior Sims is a crack shot.

TOBY

Colts misfire eleven times out of twenty. Read that in Newsweek so you know it's true. That's why my dad threw his in the river.

JUNIOR

You're old man threw his piece away because your mom made him, after that whole thing with the neighbors cat.

TOBY

That cat had it coming.

JUNIOR

I could kill you. Right here. If you want me to. Walk down that road at thirty paces. Put a bullet right between your lungs.

(Silence.)

TOBY

You gonna shot me?

JUNIOR

I was just sayin', It's one of those hypothetical things. I don't want to want to. I'm just sayin', I could, if you asked me to.

TOBY

I dare you. I double dog dare you. Shot me right between the lungs, Dungy.

JUNIOR

I'll kill you when Dungy gets here. I think Dwayne likes your Mexican girl. You can tell by the way he looks at her. I'm gonna walk into school and pop Dwayne.

TOBY

Really?

JUNIOR

Maybe. Maybe I'll kill Kevin Hardy. Or your wetback. I gotta do some kind of experiemental project for Mr. Shula in the spring. I was thinking I could line up a couple of blocks of wood and shoot 'em ten feet. Twenty feet. Thirty feet. Bang. Measure the damage that is done from each distance.

TOBY

Give it to me. I'll shoot your old man. We'll become brothers.

JUNIOR

Yeah. Gunnin' down the old man. Guns got six bullets. I only need one to pop Dwayne Eaton. Only need what, three to do a science project. Got two rounds left. Damn, I'm good. I'm gettin' hungry now. She's from Chihuahua. The wetback.

TOBY

I thought a Chihuahua was a dog.

JUNIOR

They are. Little yappy dogs, like the Taco Bell pup.

TOBY

Those commercials blow.

JUNIOR

The one with Gozilla was clever. Godzilla is the Clint of monsters. I know you like Rodan more.

TOBY

It's because Rodan can fly, and Godzilla may be sweet, but he's no Clint Eastwood. So you talked to her. You asked her where she's from.

JUNIOR

I didn't ask her jack. I overheard her talking to Mr. Grant after art class. He asked her where she was from in Mexico, like it really matters, I'm positive the whole country is the same from coast to coast. It's the second biggest city in Mexico. Looked it up on a map. What kind of people name a city after a dog? Jesus. You know what that crazy fuckin' wetback does in art class? She paints Mexican coins. You know, big Mexican quarters that are silver in the middle and brass on the edge. Two metals. But, she paints 'em up with reds and greens and blues. Their money looks funny. It's got Aztec masks on it and stuff. I think she wants to paint real quarters, but it's against the law, you know. I gotta hand it to her. She's good at painting. (*Taking a painted ten pesos coin from his pocket.*) See.

TOBY

You take that from her?

JUNIOR

Naw. She gave it to me. Didn't say nothin' to me, doesn't really matter she can't speak English worth a shit. She gave it to me and smiled. Her eyes squint a little when she smiles. Just a little. And her nose crinkles. Just a little. See, it's got a mask on it. She painted the eyes blue, like mine. And the tongue red and the shit around the head green. Mexicans are pretty backwards, but they got real cool money.

TOBY

She didn't say anything?

JUNIOR

No. She can't speak English too good. She just smiled. She takes most of the coins and glues them to this rubber bicycle tire with wallpaper paste. If Dungy don't get his ass here soon, I'm gonna bite my arm off. Damn, I'm hungry.

TOBY

I wonder if Chihuahua has palm trees.

JUNIOR

It's in the middle of the mountains. I don't think it does. It ain't the proper climate. It doesn't matter. Who cares, anyways?

TOBY

I've never seen palm trees. I've seen postcards, just not actual trees.

JUNIOR

She painted a picture of blue horses. It was on a big piece of sheet metal. Guess she got tired of coins. Large blue horses eating yellow grass. With black eyes and black ears and black snouts. Big red sky that bleed into pink, then white with just a touch of blue for the sun of all things. I think blue must be her favorite color. She hoards the blue in art class.

(TOBY puts his hands over his eyes.)

TOBY

I saw that painting. It's got palm trees behind the horses. I bet she's heard the ocean. J., you put your hands over your eyes, and you can see all the reds, yellows, and blue sparkles float across your eyes. It's getting colder, isn't it?

JUNIOR

Yeah. It is getting colder. I wonder what kind of cloths Angelina is wearing right now? I bet she's wearing old beaten up blue jeans and a red coco-cola t-shirt. Things are about to get real ugly. I can feel it.

(Lights fade.)

Act 3

(Night time. The tree has disappeared. The stars and the moon are gone. Only the boys and the road remain. TOBY is sitting with his hands over his eyes. JUNIOR holds the gun in his hand.)

JUNIOR

Bang! Down goes Dwayne Eaton with the Redskins cap on his mother fuckin' head. Bang, bang, bang. Down goes Kevin Hardy, Dusty Ziegler will sleep in Hell tonight under the cold harvest moon...right next to the lifeless body of the old man. The whip crack shotting of Junior Sims spares no one. My fingers are getting numb. I'm sticking to the trigger. What do you think we should do?

TOBY

I'm thinkin' about deep fat fried onion. With the honey mustard sauce on the side for dippin'. That's all I'm thinkin' of, amigo. I need to shit.

JUNIOR

I really didn't want to hear that.

TOBY

Pizza Hut pizza. Meat Lovers.

JUNIOR

Extra cheese.

TOBY

Hell yes, Mr. Sims. Only one true way to eat Pizza Hut pizza.

JUNIOR

Meat Lovers is the best.

TOBY

I mean, there is better pizza.

JUNIOR

Yeah, much better

TOBY

But the coupons in the mail make the difference.

JUNIOR

Well, the coupons get you the free can of Dr. Pepper. I always get coupons wrapped around the front door knob.

TOBY

Every Thursday?

JUNIOR

Yep. Get 'em after I ride my bike home from school. Some nerd rides around on a mountain bike stickin' coupons to front doors. I've seen 'im. We'll get Meat Lovers next weekend for the Clint Marathon. I just bet he's a meat lover man.

TOBY

I like the sound of that. I like the sound of damn near anything right now.

(Silence. TOBY removes his hands from his eyes.)

TOBY

Wait a minute.

JUNIOR

What?

(TOBY goes through his bag and produces a plastic bag with one single oreo cookie.)

TOBY

Double stuffed!

JUNIOR

Amigo, you forgot you had an oreo? We share it!

TOBY

We have to eat it properly.

JUNIOR

Of course. I am a civilized individual.

(TOBY separates the oreo and gives one side to Junior.)

JUNIOR

Your side has more creamy filling.

(TOBY trades cookie halves with Junior.)

JUNIOR

But it's your cookie. You earned the right to have more cream.

(TOBY trades the cookie halves once again. The two look at each other for a great deal of time. Toby trades the two halves back, giving Junior the side with more cream. Then the two begin to lick their cookies.)

TOBY

Only one true way to eat an oreo.

JUNIOR

Mother used to soak hers in orange juice.

TOBY

That's a sick fuckin' thing.

JUNIOR

Mother was awful brave. Awful brave woman. She dipped her oreos in red wine one time and got sick real bad from it.

TOBY

Was she sloshed?

JUNIOR

Does a bear shit in the woods? We should try dippin' oreos in beer. When we get back home.

TOBY

If we get back home.

JUNIOR

Fuck this. Fuckin' fuck this.

TOBY

What kind of brew?

JUNIOR

For dippin'?

TOBY

Yeah. You know like dark, or light , or fancy. They got fruity beer.

JUNIOR

Fancy. Imported.

TOBY

Green bottled beer.

JUNIOR

Yeah. Green bottled beer. The kind that movie stars drink in their own homes, on black leather sofas.

TOBY

There's ain't nothin' classier than green bottled beer.

JUNIOR

That's a fact. I bet Clint drinks beer like that.

TOBY

I've always wanted to try vodka on Captain Crunch. Or Captain Morgan's on Captain Crunch. A double Captain.

JUNIOR

'R.

TOBY

'R!

JUNIOR

'R. It's getting colder. I can't feel my thumbs anymore.

TOBY

Put down the gun. Put your hands in your arm pits.

JUNIOR

I'm sure the old man's dead by now. Drowned in his whiskey glass. You remember the first time we had a beer?

TOBY

A drink? Or a beer?

JUNIOR

What's the difference?

TOBY

You have a beer to relax. You have a drink to get drunk.

JUNIOR

The first time you had a beer.

TOBY

We were sneakin' your dad's Buds. You told me to drink a glass of water after every beer I crunched so I wouldn't be hung over in the morning.

JUNIOR

Do me a favor and don't call him my dad. This is why Mother left. I know it. She got tired of shit. She got tired of being patient. She got tired of other things too, but she got tired of being patient with the old man.

TOBY

How long has it been?

JUNIOR

Thirteen months. This'll be the second Thanksgiving without her. Dungy will promise to cook something, but he'll forget.

TOBY

She'll come back.

JUNIOR

She ain't comin' back. I can still hear her car driving away. Through the brick walls of the living room. You know when a horse breaks its leg, you put a bullet between its ears. Bang. Because the fuckin' animal is completely useless. Bang. That's my old man. He's like an old, drunken race horse that can't find the track.

(JUNIOR takes a bullet out of his gun and gives it to Toby.)

JUNIOR

Present from me to you. Remember what you got for my birthday this year?

TOBY

Red Ranger Wilderness Survival Kit.

JUNIOR

No. No, that was last year. Remember? Mother took us out to Ponderosa, and you wrapped it in leftover Christmas paper. Remember what you got me this year?

TOBY

Yeah. Yeah, the swiss army knife with a magnifying glass. So you can burn ants.

JUNIOR

Toby, I ain't in kindergarten no more. You don't burn ants, you look at shit with the magnifying glass.

TOBY

I'm just bustin' your chops, Dungy.

JUNIOR

You know what the old man got me for my birthday? You know what we did for the father slash son birthday bash?

TOBY

Yeah I know what you did.

JUNIOR

He promised. He promised me...now that Mother took off...that we would spend more time together. Like family. He promised me for my birthday we'd take a road trip, just me and him to Cincinnati, and take me to the world famous Cincinnati zoo and see the polar bears and the monkeys and the tigers and the bad ass timberwolves. He said the polar bears name was Clark. And we were gonna go to the aquarium and see all the tropical fish. We were gonna see a Reds game in there new stadium. He said we'd take the back roads, not the highways, and let me drive a stretch. We were gonna eat at a restaurant with cloth napkins...and waiters that bring the food to you. Wouldn't that be wonderful? I bet Cincinnati is wonderful. I think it would have been the perfect birthday. I told you what I did for my birthday?

TOBY

Shaved paint off the garage windows with a razor blade.

JUNIOR

While the old man took down a twelve pack and watched golf on the T.V. He said we could go to Cincinnati after I cleaned the windows. He whipped Mother. He used to whip Mother, when she was around. When I was smaller than him. He used play John Cougar Mellencamp songs real loud so the neighbors couldn't hear her whimper. He used to whip her with a brown extension cord when he'd run out of booze. Or whenever he felt like it. He used to call her a cunt. One-Eyed Jack. When the old man gets all trashed he acts like a forty five year old hand grenade. Clint wouldn't put up with that. You remember what Mother brought with us to Ponderosa when she took us out for my birthday last year?

TOBY

You mean the cake? It was yellow. With chocolate frosting she made herself from a box.

JUNIOR

No. I mean, yeah. But do you remember what she brought with us?

TOBY

She brought cloth table napkins. She made us put them on our legs. They were white.

JUNIOR

She made those. She made three. One for me. One for her, and one for Dungy. I remember thinkin' the napkin looked real nice on you.

TOBY

Cloth napkins make you look real classy. Like kings.

JUNIOR

I've been thinkin', I need a new name. James Dungy doesn't fit my skin. I'm not drunk enough for it to fit my skin. She ain't ever gonna come back. I wouldn't.

TOBY

She always comes back, it's just a matter of time. When she runs out of money.

JUNIOR

I'm thinkin' Junior Sims. Sims sounds like a gunslinger's name. Mr. Sims. I want to make it perminate.

TOBY

Yeah, sounds like the kind of guy that would ride with Wyatt Earp. I'll change my name too. Toby is such a child's name. Emmitt. You can call me Emmitt. Or Dwight.

JUNIOR

I like Dwight. Bang. Down goes Malibu Barbie. Bang. Down goes Cock Suckin' Ken.

TOBY

Bang! Down goes Skipper.

JUNIOR

Wetback Barbie. Bang.

TOBY

I'm gonna ask her to the dance.

JUNIOR

Who?

TOBY

You know who. Her.

JUNIOR

Shut up, Toby. Pissin' by the grave yard is one nasty ass goocher, I'd hate to see what kind of gooch you get takin' a sand nigger to a formal dance.

TOBY

Don't call her sand nigger, Dungy.

JUNIOR

Dances cost money. You ain't got no money, amigo.

TOBY

I got three hundred and sixty eight dollars. It's in the floorboard, under my bed.

JUNIOR

Bullshit. Where the fuck did you get that kind of money.

TOBY

Life insurance. From my father. It's my inheritance. The money, his Nebraska album, and broken record player.

JUNIOR

You are so full of it! Your record player ain't broken.

TOBY

I fixed it. Only cost me thirty two dollars.

JUNIOR

Why didn't you tell me before?

TOBY

Because it's mine. I've been waitin' for a good reason to spend the money. A tux with a Mickey Mouse bow tie, dinner at a nice restaurant with cloth table napkins, a flower to pin on her dress. That should be more than enough. We can use the rest to buy a wolf cub.

JUNIOR

You need fancy shoes. Those are expensive.

TOBY

I'll wear my fathers. I still got 'em. We buried him in his cowboy boots. I know exactly where I'm gonna take her for dinner. I'm gonna take her to that Chinese joint where you got to walk over the bridge to get to the front door. I've been studying their menu. I know exactly what I'm gonna order and she can have whatever she wants.

JUNIOR

You can't dance.

TOBY

So.

JUNIOR

It's a dance.

TOBY

You think anybody actually dances at a dance? You just stand against the gym wall and try to act cool.

JUNIOR

Well good fuckin' luck. Good fuckin' luck, amigo. You're gonna need it. Everyone will point and laugh. Dwayne Eaton is gonna want a piece of your ass, and I ain't gonna be there to shot him. What are you gonna do at the end of the night? You gonna kiss her?

TOBY

I've already kissed her. At school. Behind the dug out during gym class.

JUNIOR

You kissed her?

TOBY

That's what I said.

JUNIOR

On the mouth?

TOBY

On the mouth. Sorry.

JUNIOR

No. No, no, no. Don't say you're sorry. You can't go to the dance alone. White cloth table napkins. That's the way to go, amigo.

TOBY

I got to start livin', man. L-I-V-I-N. Hey, if she says no to me...

JUNIOR

She won't say no. She's a good kisser isn't she?

TOBY

She closes her eyes when she kisses.

JUNIOR

She looks just like the girl in Pale Rider. The one calling Clint's name out of her bedroom window, while he rides off on his horse. It's getting colder. I can't feel my lips.

TOBY

Could use a shot of prairie fire.

JUNIOR

Yeah. Dungy ain't ever gonna get here. I really don't know if I care anymore. Bang. Here, you take the gun. The safty is on the side, by your thumb. You could put a bullet in my heart from twenty paces.

(TOBY gives the bullet back to Junior.)

TOBY

You keep the bullet. It's your gun.

JUNIOR

If Dwayne comes for you, I'll kill him.

TOBY

I know.

JUNIOR

Bang. Down goes Black-Eyed Bart.

TOBY

Down goes Indian Joe.

JUNIOR

You'll never take me. I never felt this cold.

TOBY

Down goes Black-Eyed Bart!

JUNIOR

BANG!

TOBY

DOWN GOES INDIAN JOE WITH THE FEATHER IN HIS MOTHER FUCKIN' HEAD!

JUNIOR

BANG! Down goes JAMES DUNGY!

(TOBY becomes the monster once again and charges at Junior. JUNIOR takes the real gun and aims at Toby. The two boys are frozen.)

JUNIOR

Five bullets left. Buddy.

(The sound of a van roars up to the two boys and comes to a complete stop. JUNIOR and TOBY stands drowning in the van's headlights.)

JUNIOR

Hi, dad.

(JUNIOR looks at Toby, then at his father. The lights fade, and just before full black, the last line can be heard.)

JUNIOR

Bang.

(In darkness, the sound of the crickets slowly fades away. There is nothing but darkness. And silence.)

THE END