

THE GRIZZLY

Written by

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BOOK ADAPTION

Based on, The Novel by

Annabel and Edgar Johnson

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FADE IN.

1 EXT/INT. GARAGE - LONELY PLACE - NIGHT 1

A misty dark night. Where an unattached garage with the door open is nearly engulfed in mist. Barely visible is an old 1963 Ford F-100 Pick-up long Bed inside. A soft clicking of a clock can be heard.

A young boy hides in the corner. He listens for danger and tries to sink deeper into his hiding place. The sound of the clicking grows. Something moves in the grass yard.

It is a man's footsteps pacing towards him. The tall figure looms up in the darkness. David wants to run, but he is frozen as his heart's pounding adds to the growing clicking.

The sound of the clicking grows quicker, and the footsteps louder in David's ears. He shifts his feet and knocks a rake over. The tall figure knows where he is.

A silhouette with no real face but bristling brows and a glint of teeth in a crooked smile turns to David's hiding place.

The figure slowly comes closer to the boy. The sound of footsteps stops as the silhouette suddenly reaches out to grab him.

2 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - DAVID'S ROOM - BED - MORNING 2

DAVID is dreaming. He is twelve, but in his dream he is only six. He startles awake trembling.

Even though now awake he lies there pulsing with fear looking about for the shadowy figure.

David finally gets a hold of himself. Realizing the ticking is coming from his own clock.

CLOCK ON DRESSER

He remembers the shadowy figure had been real once. Because the man in his dream was his father.

DAVID looks over at a picture of his family when he was five. The boy he saw in his dream.

FRAMED PICTURE: HIS MOTHER AND FATHER STANDING BEHIND HIM ON HIS FIFTH BIRTHDAY. THE FATHER HAS HIS ARMS FOLDED ACROSS HIS CHEST AS HIS MOTHER HAS HER HAND ON DAVID'S SHOULDERS.

DAVID
(whispering to himself)
Father.

David gets up to his elbows and scans his room to a large bulletin board where a calendar hangs and some photos and a flyer on Little League tryouts in Lakewood Colorado. Plus a Denver Broncos' pennant hangs above it.

CALENDAR OPENED ON THE MONTH OF JUNE FIVE DAYS ARE X-OFF INCLUDING FRIDAY WITH A BIG RED CIRCLE AROUND SATURDAY.

ONE PHOTO HE FOCUSES ON. OIL WORKERS IN SAUDI ARABIA. HIS FATHER IS ONE OF THE MEN IN THE GROUP. WITH A RED ARROW AND THE NAME MARK ABOVE IT.

DAVID lies back down looking at the wooden ceiling. He continues to talk to himself.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Other people had dads, nice men who took them places on Sunday, to a ball game or a movie.

DAVID'S hands gathered his sheet into a fist remembering what one of the other kids had said.

DISSOLVE TO:

3 EXT. SCHOOLYARD - SIDEWALK - DAY 3

David overhears other kids brag on what they were going to do this summer.

SCHOOL KID
My pop and I are going to build a boat this summer.

DAVID can't hear more and turns away with his hands in his pockets.

He sort of envied him as he kicked the nearest can. Seeing the kid's father picking him up from school.

The school bell goes off in his daydream.

JUMP CUT TO:

4 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - DAVID'S ROOM - BED - MORNING 4

Not the school bell but is alarm clock going off.

DAVID hops out of bed hitting the button to turn off the annoying alarm.

DAVID paces about his room thinking of his father. Whenever he thought about his own father some dark image rose in his mind making him shiver, even in broad daylight like he is doing now.

DAVID forces himself to shake it off and looks out his second story window.

DAVID sees the garage where his father's red and white old truck was stored. He looks at the garage uneasily.

DAVID remembers to another time.

DISSOLVE TO:

5 INT./EXT LAKEWOOD HOUSE - YARD - NIGHT 5

MONTAGUE OF DAVID'S UNCLEAR MEMORIES AROUND THE HOUSE AND YARD

DAVID'S memories are unclear, and he is not sure why- he couldn't remember too clearly all the bad things that happened in those early days before his father had gone away.

We are shown unclear shots of DAVID overhearing arguments of his parents. Lots of fights about work, being short of money, buying the new truck, and you promised you promised that. Nothing is clear to hear, but the visual meanings are precise.

What is clear is: MARK'S solution is to go to the oil fields overseas.

DAVID gets in the way in one argument and gets knocked to the ground by bumping off one of the father's legs. An accident but in DAVID'S memory it is not clear. His mom is screaming at his father who is yelling back. Unable to cope DAVID runs out into the yard at night to hide.

His Parents move out into the yard looking for DAVID, they no longer fight now worried looking for their frightened boy.

The air is chilly, and mist hangs on the grass.

JEANNE

Davey! Where are you?

MARK

I'll find him. You go get a sweater.

MARK sees the light on in the garage and the door up. JEANNE refuses to leave. He jesters to her David must be in the garage.

JEANNE

Don't scare him more, be kind.

MARK

Don't worry I'll use my gentle voice.

6 EXT/INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - GARAGE - LONELY PLACE - NIGHT 6

DAVID hides in the corner. He listens and tries to sink deeper into his hiding place. Something moves in the grass outside in the yard.

It is a man's footsteps pacing towards him. A tall figure looms up in the darkness. MARK is silhouetted by the garage light as he reaches out his arm where he wears a wristwatch.

MARK pulls DAVID out from the hiding more gruffly than intended.

MARK

Come on David, Sorry I scared you again. But boy, you are going to have to toughen up, with me going off to work.

DAVID was trembling and frightened not hearing his fathers words.

7 EXT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - YARD - NIGHT 7

DAVID runs into his mother's arms. He is crying, and no one knows why.

JEANNE

Can't you see your boy needs you?

MARK

It changes nothing! I have to go.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - DAVID'S BEDROOM - MORNING 8

DAVID sits on the edge of his bed. He looks at the calendar again. He slowly puts on his tennis shoes dreading the day.

He knew he would dread the time when his father would come back. DAVID Looks in the mirror and sees his father's face only remembered by the photograph. He shuttered knowing he would have to meet him face to face soon.

9 EXT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - YARD - STREET - MORNING 9

A car pulls up outside the Lakewood house and drops off a man with several over stuff duffel bags. The man is only seen from the back as he stands on the dirt driveway looking at the house.

10 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - DAVID'S BEDROOM - MORNING 10

DAVID peers through the curtains, out the window, and sees now the day had come. His father has returned.

DAVID

It has come too soon.

David goes back to his calendar. Checks the date.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(nervously)

It can't be today, so soon!

DAVID does not like the red-checked flannel shirt he had put on, he tears it off grabbing another one, same shirt different color.

DAVID plops down in a chair with the flannel shirt half on.

DISSOLVE TO:

11 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - JEANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 11

JEANEE tosses a letter off the top of a pile of bills onto the bed. Clearly from her husband, Mark from Saudi Arabia.

JEANEE reads it last. She goes through many emotions reading it. But finally throws it in the trash and leaves the room slamming the door.

After a few seconds she comes back in her bedroom and pulls it from the trash.

JEANEE rereads it with her hand on her forehead shaking her head.

DAVID hearing the door thud came to his mother's room.

DAVID
Mother you okay?

JEANNE
Yes, Davey. I think your father is
finally coming home.

DAVID leans against the door jam trying to brace himself. He felt pretty puny- all lose inside.

DAVID
Is that a good thing?

His mother waves him over for a hug.

JEANNE
Yes, it is a good thing.

JEANEE breaks from the hug looking at her boy. Seeing he is no longer a child.

JEANNE (CONT'D)
I know your father has been away
for a very long time.

DAVID
Six years mother. It was a long
time, but now I wish I had more.

JEANNE
Time passes so quickly, but you got
a little more time, he won't be
here tomorrow. Don't you worry
Davey. Now off to bed with you.

JEANEE kisses her sons cheek and sends him off to bed.

JEANEE picks up the letter again. She then places it to her chest and curls up with it in the middle of the big bed.

DISSOLVE TO:

12 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

12

JEANEE stands at the sink doing the dishes. DAVID sits at the table with his school books laid out on the table.

JEANNE
(nervously)
Your father called today.

DAVID looks up from his books.

DAVID
(hoping)
From Saudi Arabia?

JEANNE
Your father is in town. He wants to
see you- he wants to take you
camping this weekend.

DAVID is shocked, frustrated and unprepared to hear the news.
He pushes back away from the table.

DAVID
Today is Monday! I wish I could
have grown more before I had to
meet this day.

JEANNE
I know it is sudden Davey.

DAVID'S hands went instantly wet, and he thrust his clenched
fists into his pockets.

DAVID
If I was just taller and didn't
perspire so much!

Under DAVID'S blue-checked shirt he can feel the prickle of
sweat.

JEANNE turns from the sink wiping her hands on a tea-towel.

JEANNE
You mustn't be afraid of him. He
won't hurt you. In fact, he's not
really harsh, and in most ways he
is a fine person. And I don't think
he's ever been afraid of anything
in his life. He's so strong.

Her eyes quickened with an excitement DAVID had never seen
before. Then she looks away.

JEANNE (CONT'D)
So strong himself that he never has
understood any sort of weakness.

DAVID

I am not so weak, I can do ten pushups.

JEANNE

He'd expect you to do twenty or maybe fifty. That's what I am trying to say.

JEANNE sits down at the table next to DAVID.

JEANNE (CONT'D)

(hurriedly)

If he tries to goad you into doing something beyond your strength, you must simply say no. Politely, no.

JEANNE pats the back of DAVID'S hand.

JEANNE (CONT'D)

Your father has a curious way of testing people.

DISSOLVE TO:

13 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - DAVID'S BEDROOM - MORNING 13

DAVID puts his other arm in the blue and white checked shirt and buttons it.

He heads down the stairs to find a man.

DAVID ENTERS THE ROOM, VIEWED OVER THE MAN'S BACK SHOULDER.

14 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING 14

JEANNE introduces them as if they were strangers. MARK'S POV looking down at DAVID.

DAVID wipes his hand on his pants and shakes his father's big hand.

CUT TO:

15 INT./EXT. MARK'S 1963 FORD PICK-UP - HIGHWAY - DAY 15

DAVID opens and shuts his eyes, making sure this was no dream. He stares straight ahead out the windshield.

Right this minute he and this stranger who is his father are sitting in the cab only an arms reach apart.

They have left the suburbs of Lakewood behind. Hopped on Highway 70 and headed west going up into the mountains.

Just the two of them, together busting along in the pick-up truck at sixty miles an hour.

THE PICK-UP TRUCK ZIPS BY ALONG THE HIGHWAY.

16 INT. PICK-UP - HIGHWAY - DAY 16

Cautiously DAVID risks a sidelong glance at the man behind the wheel.

DAVID marvels how clearly it was coming back to him how his dad looked. MARK had not changed in DAVID'S mind.

MARK'S lean face with its jutting blond brows, frowning against the glare of the afternoon sun.

DAVID remembered that frown, but it wasn't half as dangerous as the crooked smile.

DAVID watches the powerful-looking hands that grip the wheel. The arms that showed beneath the rolled-up shirtsleeves were tough as leather.

THE PICK-UP TRUCK MOVES DOWN THE HIGHWAY DIMINISHED BY THE SURROUNDING FOREST.

17 EXT. PICK-UP - HIGHWAY - DAY 17

From outside the window MARK'S every movement is sure, with an elbow on the window sill holding the steering wheel he sticks his right hand two fingers in his shirt pocket and pulls out a pack of cigarettes, and shakes one loose. He tosses it into his mouth like magic.

MARK strikes a kitchen match with his thumbnail and lights the cigarette and waves out the wooden match. Then rolls the blackened end in his fingers. And puts it in the ashtray.

MARK drops his hand to the wheel again and spins it quickly to swerve the truck off the highway onto a side road. With the cigarette dangling on his lip.

Mark turns again onto a gravel road worn down to the ribs. The pick-up jars along it like a jackhammer.

18 INT/EXT. PICK-UP - ROUGH DIRT ROAD - DAY

18

DAVID glimpsed the sign in a haze of dust - Enjoy Your National Forest, and it was gone.

After a bit they topped a rise in the land and DAVID glanced back uneasily. He can't make out where the paved highway was.

Dense pine woods have folded in around them, stretching off on all sides, rising to timberline on the high peaks to the west. Barren and raw, the range was still wearing dense patches of snow.

The mountains took on a terrible, beautiful sharpness where white-rimmed rocks tower above ragged deep canyons.

A wilderness except for a few rough-cut roads like the one they traveled on.

They hadn't passed a car since they left the highway. David shuddered slightly.

The man beside him glanced over. Deep under his brows his eyes were a burning blue, like the heart of a match when it flares.

MARK

You cold or something?

DAVID

No, sir.

DAVID grows quiet.

DAVID (V.O.)

I had no idea father was even thinking of me.

THE FATHER AND SON HAVE BEEN TRAVELING THROUGH EMPTINESS TOGETHER BUT A LONG WAY APART. NOW THE TRUCK SEEMED SMALL AND CLOSE, STIFLINGLY WITH SILENCE.

DAVID turns and looks out his window remembering.

DISSOLVE TO:

19 EXT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

19

DAVID'S first memory of days when he was little. Hearing angry words and rough hands of his father. The earliest recollection DAVID has of being hit.

On the back porch, his mother watches worried that MARK is playing too rough with DAVID.

In the yard Mark jabs at the young boy. Poking DAVID in the chest like a boxer.

DAVID looks up at that crooked grin.

MARK
Come on boy hit back! Hit back
hard!

After a few sparring jabs MARK clips by accident DAVID'S nose. It is DAVID who put his face in the wrong spot and not holding his fists up like a boxer.

Blood burst all down DAVID'S shirt front.

JEANEE rushed from the porch.

JEANNE
(screaming)
Stop it, Mark. Stop!

DISSOLVE TO:

20 EXT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - SIDE YARD - CLOTHESLINE - DAY 20

Another memory the summer before his father left. JEANNE hangs wet clothes on the lines. The lines are connected to two T-shaped steel poles on each end.

DAVID sees MARK lift him up to grasp the cross beam of the 'T' How high it had seemed back then. He hears his father in that robust way of his.

MARK
Go on, boy, you've got to learn to
hang on.

DAVID tried to hang on. But fell and got the wind knocked out of him. He choked and choked to get his breath back.

JEANNE
(more screaming)
He's too young, Mark!

DISSOLVE TO:

21 EXT. LAKE - PICNIC AREA - SWIMMING AREA - DAY

21

MARK swims out beyond the buoys that mark the swimming boundary.

MARK comes in where DAVID paddles around lamely never going out deeper than his toes can touch bottom. Not really swimming at all.

JEANNE sets out food from a picnic basket on the table, near the new 1963 red and white Ford pickup. She turns to see MARK pulling DAVID out to deeper water.

DAVID tries not to panic. As he hears his mother scream. Rushing towards the water.

JEANNE

Mark, No!

MARK does not respond to her but tells DAVID.

MARK

Best you learn how to swim right
boy, you are six now! It's sink-or-
swim time!

MARK lifts his son out of the water and tosses DAVID further out.

MARK (CONT'D)

Now kick your legs, get on top of
the water.

DAVID slaps around going nowhere, but unaware he is actually staying afloat and above water.

JEANNE

(screaming again)
He can't swim Mark!

DAVID sees his mother rush into the water with her clothes on while yelling at MARK.

MARK turns back to his wife.

MARK

He's got to learn to swim!

At that moment, DAVID stops paddling and kicking and sinks under the water. He can hear the muffled shouting of his parents above.

Under the water, something down in the deep touched him. It was only sea-grass wrapping around his legs, but regardless, it made him panic. He kicks and paddles in the muck, in the unseen deep, going nowhere again.

MARK'S powerful hand plunges down into the water pulling DAVID out. He drags his boy closer to shore. DAVID is coughing and gagging on water.

JEANNE meets them halfway in waist-deep of water.

JEANNE

Mark, how could you! You're too rough with him, he is only six and has plenty of time to learn to swim!

JEANNE swings an intended slap to MARK'S face but is caught by his hand at her wrist. She glares at MARK as he lets her arm go. She carries DAVID from the water hurriedly, her boy almost too large for her to carry.

MARK

He's not a baby anymore!

DISSOLVE TO:

22 EXT. MOUNTAIN PARK - RIVER - DEEP POOL - SHORE - DAY 22

DAVID remembers there had been a lot of bad times in those days, dangerous times. He has unclear visions near some deep water.

DAVID can't remember what it was, but he was sure whatever it was because he could not swim.

DAVID looks back to the river at the dark water, thinking about it made his heart pound. He could still see the black ripples, sipping, sipping...

FADE OUT:

FADE BACK INTO
SCENE:

23 INT. PICK-UP - ROUGH DIRT ROAD - DAY 23

DAVID shudders again trying to shove the old memories away.

He looks at his father driving the pick-up. Maybe the dreams have been wrong.

DAVID (V.O.)
 He is just an ordinary guy, driving
 along, coat off, hat tipped back on
 his head, necktie loose and askew.

DAVID whispers to himself looking out the side window.

DAVID
 What's to be scared of?

MARK
 You say, something boy?

DAVID
 No, sir, just talking to myself.

DAVID stares out the window and thinks, as he watches the
 trees fly past.

DAVID (V.O.)
 (firmly)
 Besides I'm older now. I'm going on
 twelve, and that is fairly old.

JUMP CUT TO:

24 MONTAGUE: IMAGES OF DAVID 24

He sees bits and pieces in his mind's eye. The trees turn
 into him cutting the lawn, taking out the trash, and washing
 the truck. He picks out a pocket knife he wanted, He walks
 around downtown. While harassed by other kids he pushes back
 verbally taking no bother from them.

DAVID (V.O.)
 Old enough to have your own
 allowance and a good pocket knife,
 and go downtown by yourself. And
 not take anything off other guys at
 school. Old enough not to be afraid
 of people.

DISSOLVE TO:

25 INT. PICK-UP - ROUGH DIRT ROAD - DAY 25

DAVID Catches a faint reflection of himself in the window
 glass. Lank dark hair and eyes sprung wide with foreboding. A
 broad mouth pressed too tight.

He licked his lips and tries to sit more relaxed.

DAVID (V.O.)
 If there is one thing you don't
 want to do, it's to let anybody
 know you're worried.

DAVID stared at his image.

DAVID (V.O.)
 It's like being nervous about dogs;
 if they sense it they get meaner.

He looks out beyond his own image, out at the dense woods all
 around them.

They go passed another dirt road, and a sign reading, To
 Trapper's Creek.

The name jolts DAVID alert, and he remembers.

DAVID (V.O.)
 There had been a fuss about that
 place this morning before we left.

JUMP CUT TO:

26 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING 26

Standing in the living room the three of them being polite.

JEANNE did the introductions.

DAVID'S noticed his mother had even smiled strangely.

DAVID looks awkward in his new clothes, with the cuff of his
 blue jeans stiff around his ankles.

DAVID watches his mother. He notices she looks crisp too, in
 a new dress.

DAVID (V.O.)
 Mom seems to be acting odd, I think
 she is scared too. Why had she
 gotten so fixed up if she wasn't
 going with us?

There they stood JEANNE and DAVID, side by side, facing the
 tall man. DAVID can sense how fluttery she is.

JEANNE trying to stay calm.

JEANNE
 Where will you take David? I'd Like
 to know Mark.

MARK
Who knows where the fishing will
look best. Maybe Trapper's Creek.

She burst out quickly.

JEANNE
Not Trapper's!

Sounding more reasonable.

JEANNE (CONT'D)
It's just that some men got snowed
in up there this time last year.

MARK shrugged.

MARK
Snow.

That has upset her even more.

JEANNE
David's just a little boy. I won't
have you putting him through some
ordeal!

David flushed with embarrassment.

DAVID
(whining)
Mom!

David continues in his mind.

DAVID (V.O.)
Golly mom, you're a wonderful
mother, the kindest, best, but of
all times to call me a "little
boy."

Her commit had galled the father too.

MARK
(roughly)
Maybe you expect us to go fishing
in the back yard. Jeanne, I can't
draw you a map of my plans. The
court has granted me this weekend
with my son, and I'm taking him.

MARK looks out the living room windows checking the weather
outside and looks at the time on his wristwatch.

MARK (CONT'D)
 (in a softer voice)
 That is if he's willing. Well
 David?

MARK spoke DAVID'S name with a quick uppercut on the last syllable, it sounded like a dare.

DAVID just stared back not knowing what to say but his mind was racing.

DAVID (V.O.)
 If you want to go to Trapper's
 Creek, I don't give a darn about a
 little snow.

But nothing came out except a nod yes.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 EXT/INT. PICK-UP - ROUGH DIRT ROAD - DAY 27

SO HERE THEY WERE BOUNCING DOWN THE DIRT ROAD, AND THEY HAD JUST GONE PASSED THE TURN-OFF TO TRAPPER'S CREEK.

MARK'S jaw is knotted tight and hard. Apparently he has something troubling on his mind.

Looking at his father DAVID could guess what he was thinking.

DAVID (V.O.)
 I remember from years ago a
 terrible sentence came to hang in
 the air. It was the last thing my
 father said before he went away for
 good.

DAVID hears his fathers words in his head.

MARK (V.O.)
 I warn you, Jeanne, you'll turn
 this boy into a sissy!

DAVID stares out the window. He knows, his father hasn't forgotten that.

DAVID notices the truck slowing down.

DAVID
 I saw the Trapper's Creek sign a
 little bit ago.

MARK

Yeah, I know. Not going there right off, I got a better place.

Right in the middle of nowhere MARK is scanning the edge of the road.

At a particular spot, he turns off and drives straight into the forest.

28

EXT/INT. PICK-UP - FOREST TRACK ROAD - DAY

28

The forest road is an old track nobody has used for years. Never graded the wheels ride in two tracks with grass and plants growing in the middle of it.

The truck snakes between tall pines. It is chocked with dry brush that tears at the underside of the truck. On either side branches claw at the windows.

The track was not a road as roads go and it looks as if it might dead-end any minute. MARK drives on as if he knew where he was going.

DAVID watches MARK with secret misgivings. His father has a look of satisfaction in his stern face.

DAVID (V.O.)

He has intended to come here all along. But why wouldn't he just say so, then?

MARK glances over at DAVID swiftly.

DAVID let go of the door handle not realizing he was hanging on to it so hard.

MARKS face takes on an expression of amusement.

MARK

A good thing to get away from the crowds. Fishing is better back here too.

DAVID

(polite but firmly)
Yes, sir.

MARK

Ever been fishing?

DAVID

Yes, sir. I've done a little.

MARK
Fly fishing?

DAVID
I use worms.

MARK
You'll like flies better. More sport to it. The idea is to outsmart the fish. Take a hook with some feathers tied to it, make him think it's a real insect.

DAVID
I have seen trout flies in the sporting goods store, but I could never see much to them.

MARK
No, there is really not.

DAVID
Now a worm must smell good, probably even tastes good to a fish.

MARK
Of course fly-casting is harder.

MARK shoots DAVID a keen look, like a jab in the ribs-I dare you.

The dare and that look brought back to DAVID his mother's warning. He looks over at his father.

JEANNE (V.O.)
Your father has a curious way of testing people...

DAVID sat uneasily on the bench seat and worries.

DAVID (V.O.)
I am beginning to have a strong hunch that father has something on his mind, all right. Something bigger than fishing.

The truck hits a bump and DAVID grabs the door handle again.

DAVID (V.O.)
Why is he going to all this effort, driving miles and miles into the deep part of the forest?

DAVID pulls himself nearer the door.

DAVID
What had he said? Can't draw you a
map of my plans.

All at once the word he thought took on an ominous ring and DAVID feels an enormous pressure pushing him back into his seat.

DAVID (CONT'D)
This must be what is bothering
mother. Not some off-chance of a
late spring snowstorm, but a
nameless, lurking suspicion of
trouble.

While DAVID was thinking and fretting MARK was going on about fishing.

MARK
Pretty early in the season for
insects. Maybe some hatches,
though.

DAVID looked at his father trying to listen. But he had an uneasy feeling in his gut.

MARK (CONT'D)
In fly fishing you go in pursuit of
the trout. You don't just sit on
the bank, dunking worms. You walk
casting as you go. You wade the
streams, if necessary, to reach the
fish's hideout, tempt him out of
it. Get him to strike. In a sense,
you stalk him.

DAVID wanted to wriggle.

DAVID (V.O.)
Wild animals stalk things.

Up ahead in the road DAVID saw the fallen tree across the track. In a rush of relief he blurts out.

DAVID
The road's blocked! I reckon we'll
have to go back.

MARK braked the car and eyed him briefly.

MARK

You let every little thing keep you
from going where you want, you'll
never get anywhere.

29 EXT. PICK-UP - FOREST TRACK ROAD - DOWNED TREE - DAY 29

MARK hops out of the Ford and motions for DAVID to lean forward, behind the seat he pulls out an ax.

DAVID crawls out too. He watches his father standing there sizing up the problem.

Mark pulls off the tie and strips off his shirt and approaching the tree he hefts the ax and brings it down into the fallen timber.

DAVID watches with uneasy fascination. His father's torso was unlike other dads in town, a deep bronze, firm and topped with short brush-cut hair, scorched by the sun to a straw color.

MARK'S shoulders look like the had been chipped out of solid rock, except that the muscles slid and rippled as MARK lit into the downed pine.

MARK'S blade rose and fell in long, deadly sweeps. Chips sprayed right and left. Without his hat and shirt he was a fierce-looking man.

In short time with the last crack, the tree fell in two. MARK laid hold of the upper part and heaved it aside far enough for the truck to pass.

Without putting his shirt on again he stowed the ax behind the seat and swings in behind the wheel.

Mark moved so fast DAVID was left still gazing at the chopped tree thrown aside.

MARK

Well come-on boy!

DAVID scrambles back to his seat. He looks at MARK, and after all that he wasn't even sweating! DAVID, on the other hand, seemed small and moist.

MARK lights another smoke, and they were off again.

DISSOLVE TO:

30 EXT. PICK-UP - FOREST ROAD END - AERIAL SHOT - EVENING 30

All around the Ford pickup truck the woods are in deep shadows though the sky is full of light. Then as if the truck has suddenly come through to the end of a long tunnel it bursts forth into the open.

31 EXT/INT. PICK-UP - OPEN MEADOW - EVENING 31

Flanked by mountains on either side they are in a valley. For miles it spread out around them in winter-brown grassland. Carving through it a young river lay like a sheet of dark glass.

DAVID looks out the windshield at the far side of the valley where a high cliff rises. A sheer rock face towers a thousand feet afire with the sunset.

MARK guides the truck off across the broad meadow. He finds a spot a stones throw from the river and cuts the engine. The trucks red and white color seems out of place in this setting. In the stillness of the drift of the evening wind, four hundred feet away came the mutter of the steam.

MARK
Nobody is here.

MARK stares up at the cliff, his high-boned face was ruddy from its light.

MARK (CONT'D)
Nobody but us.

DAVID
Who lives down that way?

DAVID makes a random motion towards the far end of the valley. But he can see it is deserted.

MARK fixed the boy with the kind of look he gave the tree blocking the road. He put back on his shirt watching DAVID.

DAVID was pinned and held to his seat. Questions flashed in his mind.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What does he want? What do they ever want, grown-ups with their questions, their tests? They never explain what they're getting at, they just watch you like a hawk!

MARK
 You don't mind, do you? Being here
 by ourselves?

DAVID
 (defiantly)
 I like to be alone!

MARK
 Maybe... you'd rather be here all
 alone?

MARK grinned that strange one-sided smile.

DAVID starts to squirm, he recognizes the nightmare smile,
 but somehow worse. He frets.

DAVID (V.O.)
 There's wasn't going to be any
 waking up out of this one!

CUT TO:

32 EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - PICK-UP TAILGATE DOWN - EVENING 32

Standing at the back of the truck MARK and DAVID look into an
 opened tackle box. In a smaller plastic box MARK opens are
 numerous artificial flies.

MARK
 Now then, David. Choose a couple of
 flies, whatever looks good to you.

DAVID
 They're all very nice.

DAVID was thinking fast.

DAVID (V.O.)
 This whole thing is a test! It is
 beginning to take shape in my mind,
 what this secret plan of my fathers
 might be.

MARK
 (impatient)
 It's not rocket science, David,
 pick some!

DAVID
 It might take me a while to learn
 to use flies, though. So Maybe...

MARK

Burning the last of the light.

DAVID

It's so late, maybe you'd rather do some fishing yourself right now.

MARK

(more impatient)

Yes, of course it's late. But I can give you a quick run-down on how to handle your rod.

DAVID

I don't always seem to get the hang of things like fishing!

MARK pulls 2 fly rods, and a bait fishing pole from the truck and quickly begins to set up the rods.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I mean sports. I got a D in Phys. Ed., at school last semester.

MARK

If you're not good, the idea is to get good.

DAVID

Yes, sir. Only I...

DAVID went silent.

MARK finished putting the rods together and pulled on his old clothes. He waited and lighted another smoke and waited a moment longer.

MARK

Well?

DAVID

I could watch you for a while first.

MARK

Do as you will.

The creek seemed to be louder in MARK'S ears. He couldn't wait any longer and strides off towards the river. Leaving DAVID to make up his own mind to come or not.

DAVID is all twisted inside. It had been a few tight minutes. He hops up and sits on the tailgate, talking to himself, a habit he had when he needed to work things out.

DAVID

Dang, I wish I hadn't had to sound so dumb. Of all things on earth he hadn't meant to tell Mark, it was about the D.

He looks at different fishing things in the tackle box.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I had no time to consider my words. But I will make sure I don't get drawn into going away from the truck.

DAVID hops down off the tailgate and walks toward the front of the truck. He caught a look at himself in the window.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Because that was part of the scheme. I am almost sure.

DAVID waited a moment seeing if his reflection would say something else.

DAVID went to the front and leans on the bumper, and looks off to where his father had gone.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What about the way dad, father... Gads, I don't even know what to call him, MARK?

DAVID kicks the down grass at his feet.

DAVID (CONT'D)

When he had said "all alone," with a teasing, challenging look. He sort of is sizing me up. And what had mother said, "His curious ways of testing people..."

CUT TO:

33

EXT. MEADOW BORDER - VIEW OF RIVER - EVENING

33

At the border of the meadow, MARK stops and looks back to see if DAVID was coming. Nothing, so he shrugs, and goes on down the bank to the river's edge.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - PICK-UP - EVENING

34

DAVID slid his sweaty hands into his pockets, leaning on the truck.

DAVID

And what would be a slicker way for Mark to test a person's gumption than to lure him downstream a distance.

DAVID pushes off the truck and heads around the Ford.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Then sneak back and just drive off and leave him?

DAVID continues to circle the truck seeing his image again in the driver's side window. Not wishing to argue with himself he leans against the door.

DAVID (CONT'D)

All alone... for how long, Overnight? Or maybe until Sunday. See if I could catch my own food, see how I'd take care of myself? Or if I panic?

The cold steel of the truck body is biting through the thin flannel shirt. DAVID is leaning back hard against it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I am going to stick to this old pickup like a coat of paint. But I can't! He is looking back right now. I'm supposed to be following. Watching.

DISSOLVE TO:

35 EXT. RIVER - EVENING

35

MARK has waded into the water, current boiling around the rubber hip boots he wore. He glances over his shoulder again.

He lets out the line then pulls it back out of the water into the air. The line goes back over his head, and then he brings the line back forward again. An artificial fly is tied on the end of the clear leader line.

MARK, satisfied with the distance, lowers the line towards the water. He flicks the line over and out just above the water shadow casting.

In hopes a big luncker spies the fly from down below in the deep water and would propel itself out of the water in hopes of a meal.

DISSOLVE TO:

36 EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - PICK-UP - EVENING 36

DAVID pulls on a coat. He bruised himself putting on the heavy wool jacket. But that only took so long.

DAVID

I guess there is nothing else to do
but play this fearsome game.

He leaves the truck and drifts warily across the meadow towards the river.

37 EXT. RIVER - EVENING 37

DAVID crests a small rise near the river's edge. He views the tumbling water uneasily. Some memory is forgotten.

He moves closer and sees that the channel is faster than he'd thought, sweeping hard between rocks, and swirling backward into deep pools.

He moves along the bank and sees in this place it was almost overflowing the bank, fingering to find any little soft spot where it could breakthrough.

DAVID wondered why a sick sense of dread came over him.

DAVID

Strange, I'm not afraid of just any
water. I know how to swim, I
learned to swim in the YMCA pool,
like everyone else.

DISSOLVE TO:

38 EXT. LAKE - PICNIC AREA - SWIMMING AREA - DAY 38

DAVID is back engulfed in the memory at a scary moment when he was six. At a time when his father had tried to force him to learn to swim. He saw it all over again.

MARK is pulling DAVID out to deeper water, from DAVID'S POV.

DAVID stops all motion and sinks watching his mother run into the water with her clothes on. With the pickup parked behind.

Under the water sea-grass seems to reach-out and wrap around his legs holding on to him. He panics and with the imagination of a six-year-old he fights off some creature in the deep. He is being pulled deeper into the unknown.

FADE OUT.

FADE BACK TO
SCENE:

39 EXT. RIVER - EVENING 39

DAVID is still staring at the water.

DAVID

All I know is that nothing is going
to make me wade into that river!

In the stillness DAVID'S own pulse thumps hard in his ears. It is quieter here than any place he'd ever been.

40 EXT. THE VALLEY SHOTS - MEADOW - CLIFFS - RIVER - EVENING 40

Aerial shots of the valley. The birds have hushed, the fields seemed hardly to breathe. The evening settled in, and the air is clear as freshly washed grass. It made everything vivid. The cliff, the meadow ringed around with woods. With a river that ran through it babbling along finding its own course. In the river big trout breaks the surface skimming up flying insects that have landed. A lone Fly fisherman tests his skills lit by the last glow from the sun at dusk.

41 EXT. RIVER - SOGGY MEADOW - MARSH - DUSK 41

DAVID had reaches a place where the river is brimming out of its bank. It has turned a whole big patch of meadow soggy. His sneakers are sinking in it, and he quickly retreats to dry ground.

DAVID

(angry confusion)

Great! Of course Mark had gone
right through wearing his waders!
Am I supposed to slog right on into
the mud up to my knees?

DAVID Skirted the marsh looking for a way to the river. He trips over something, a clod of earth, and stops short.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 How did clods gets turned over out
 here? A whole patch of ground was
 dug up evenly as somebody was
 looking for worms. Some other
 fisherman? It must be!

DAVID hopefully scans the darkening valley, he half expected
 to see a light somewhere below. But the dusk is unbroken.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 So Mark was wrong. We are not alone
 after all. Nice to discover my
 father can be mistaken about
 something.

It is getting so dark it is hard to see. David hesitates,
 listens, and hears something moving along the river bank.

DAVID peers hard, and he can just make out the dim silhouette
 of his father coming back. A tall figure, moving through the
 shadows.

DISSOLVE TO:

42 EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - 42
 NIGHT

DAVID watches MARK set the fire, he tries to memorize each
 move his father is making. After it is built MARK gets out a
 match.

DAVID (V.O.)
 Get out your match, except suppose
 you don't have one!

Mark lights the fire and tosses the matchbox aside. DAVID
 picks it up. On the side of the Cardboard matchbox it says
 'strike anywhere'

Mark is busy with the fire. He makes sure it is burning just
 right.

DAVID fiddles with the matchbox and manages to take six
 matches, red with a white tip, out and slip them into his
 coat pocket without being noticed.

DAVID (V.O.)
 If there is a plan, it is not going
 to turn out the way Mark has
 figured it at first.

DAVID rolls the matches around in his pocket.

DAVID (V.O.)

(jumpy)

I can't tell how the 'PLAN' is going to be sprung on me. All I know, I darn well better learn to build a fire.

The grass crackled, as thin flames licked through small sticks snatching at the small ones on top. With a huff the whole pile caught and blazed, casting a brightness up into MARK'S somber face.

He glanced across at DAVID. Seemly in pretty good humor.

DAVID

Catch any? I guess we would be eating them if you did.

MARK

Not always about catching, it about the going. Seeing the water feeling the mountain air.

Something made DAVID brave.

DAVID

I thought you were some great fisherman.

DAVID tried to take it back once he said it.

MARK

I guess you don't get it. How could you?

The fire died down and started making coals. MARK added a few more sticks to build a perfect cooking fire.

MARK (CONT'D)

You could get the groceries.

DAVID gets up and heads to the back of the pickup.

DAVID

(whispering to himself)

I am surer than ever there is some other real purpose to this trip. But I have no idea what the next step will be.

The truck bed is roofed over by an aluminum "Camper" a metal shell fastened onto the body.

Inside is a tumble of junk: old clothes, bedrolls, frying pans, and nets. DAVID'S overnight bag, a canvas kit that his mother had packed is there. David's name clearly printed on its side.

He touched the writing on his bag missing his mother.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Wonder how mom is, having dinner
all alone?

For a minute his whole longing stretched off across the miles.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I can't help her tonight, and she
can't help me.

DAVID returns to the fire and sets down the food. He isn't hungry, no appetite at all.

When Mark had bacon strips cooking, mounted on sticks over the fire DAVID began to feel a pang in his belly.

The site of two open cans of beans bubbling and charring in flames is bound to make anybody's mouth water.

MARK
Hold your bacon over the can so the
drippings get on the beans. That's
the trick.

MARK sounded friendly. So friendly it disturbed DAVID. But with the fire at his feet and food warming his belly he felt almost comfortable.

MARK (CONT'D)
This is exactly what I had to eat
when I made my first camp in this
valley. Wasn't much older than you.
I came in on foot, just roaming the
mountains and here it was.

MARK flips his stick over with the bacon on it. He is in his element. He feels at home and comfortable in his surroundings. He is efficient and moves with ease.

MARK (CONT'D)
Did you ever discover a place?
Nothing can make you feel so much
as if it's your own as having it
all to yourself.

DAVID came alert with a jolt. There it was again, the plan, showing around the edge of this brotherly talk. Anxiously he digs into his beans, while watching his father eat his bacon dipping it in the can of beans.

DAVID (V.O.)
 If I am going to be left to enjoy
 the valley all by myself it will be
 useful to have eaten a good supper.

With the beans quickly gone, DAVID put several more pieces of bacon over the fire.

MARK watches his son with that uneven smile.

MARK
 This is happening just as I
 pictured it over there in the
 African desert, where it is so hot
 you sweat and swelter. I knew as
 soon as my contract was up I was
 coming back here. To this spot.
 Just like this on a cool night in
 late May. I knew I was going to
 bring you along too.

It gave DAVID an odd feeling to learn that his father had been working on this clear over in Africa.

DAVID
 Why?

The question caught MARK off guard.

MARK
 Well, when a man has a son- Put it
 this way: Didn't you ever wonder
 about me, all these years?

DAVID
 Yes, sir.

DAVID nods and stuffs more food in his mouth not to have to say more but remembers...

DISSOLVE TO:

Back in the year of his parents separation, in the middle of the night.

DAVID lay there shaking with a fear he couldn't quite understand. The silence echoed with a clash of words he couldn't make out.

BACK TO:

44 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - NIGHT 44

DAVID sits across the fire from MARK finishing the beans and bacon.

DAVID wondered about his father, all right, about what really happened all those times when he was little.

MARK
(quietly)
Did your mother ever talk about me?

DAVID pretended for a minute to be eating. Not sure what to say.

DAVID
She didn't speak much about you.

There is silence between them and DAVID thought again..

45 INT. LAKEWOOD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 45

The television is on. JEANNE and DAVID sit on the couch. A show comes on about Oil Production in the Middle East.

DAVID
Is that where father is?

The site of oil fields out in the desert of Africa brought tears to her eyes.

JEANNE
Yes, Davey, but I just can't talk about him.

She gets up from the couch and rushes out of the room.

DAVID looks after her.

DAVID
I've done it again. Whenever I happened to ask her about father it bring a sadness to her that lasts for several days.

DISSOLVE TO:

BACK TO SCENE:

46 EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - 46
NIGHT

DAVID

She said you gave us money.

MARK grunted.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Once she said she had wondered if you were keeping enough for yourself. That maybe you were sending to much.

MARK

I got by.

DAVID

She told me you were a good engineer.

MARK

(puzzled)

Didn't she tell you why I- I was gone for so long?

DAVID

She never says anything bad about other people.

MARK'S face darkens. He pokes a stick around in the fire.

MARK

There wasn't anything so very bad to tell. We just differed. I thought it would be best for everybody if I took the job in Africa...(change in tone)...I'm sure she has been a fine mother to you.

MARK stands looking off to the cliff.

MARK (CONT'D)

She's a wonderful, warm...(he changes tone again)... But now you're of an age when you need to go places with a man once in a while.

Mark backs off a bit from the fire and looks at the sky where stars a beginning to show.

MARK (CONT'D)
Learn to tackle something bigger
than everyday problems.(pause)By
God, look at this place!

MARK took it all in, glad to be away from the stark desert he'd lived with for the last five years. He poured precious water on the camp fire, although plentiful. He stamps the hissing wet coals out.

MARK (CONT'D)
You ought to know how to get your
own food. Make your way through the
forest.

DAVID squirmed and got up. He went to throw his empty bean can in the trash box and MARK followed.

47 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - PICK-UP TAILGATE DOWN - EVENING 47

Together MARK and DAVID walk around the rear of the pickup to the open tailgate. They toss the empty cans in an old box. DAVID peers into the truck.

DAVID
I reckon I'll sleep inside.

MARK
(sharply)
Nonsense! Half the pleasure is to
lie under the stars!

DAVID
Yes, sir.

DAVID reaches in and pulls his pack to him opening it. There he finds his pajamas and pulls them out. He unfolds his night ware, and something falls out rolling on the ground.

MARK bends scooping it up - a tin of ham. His brows drew together angrily.

MARK
Did you put this in?

DAVID
No, sir.

MARK

Then your mother must have. I guess she thought- What the devil did she think?

DAVID felt proud of his mother for thinking of him. He saw a vision of his mother, beautiful and anxious, with the can of ham in her hand, slipping it in with his clothes in case he might need it.

DAVID

(unsteadily)

There's a candy bar, too.

MARK stares at the can absently. With a shrug he tosses it back into DAVID'S bag. He grabs his bed roll and snags the other sleeping bag and stuffs it into DAVID'S arms.

A few feet behind the pickup MARK crouches down and spreads out his bed roll, he nods to DAVID to do the same a few feet away, but near him.

DAVID gets into his pajamas and slip into his bag. He chews his lip resentfully. His father still stands looking at the stars. He is stripped to the waist in his Levis and bare footed.

DAVID (V.O.)

Not that Mark has said anything against mother; I think it is his look- sort of disgust towards her I don't like.

Still seething, DAVID bundles himself into the sleeping bag.

Mark slips into his bag. After a moment he talks moodily out of the darkness.

MARK

To be really honest with this place we shouldn't even have brought beans. The old settler the first man in here- he probably didn't have any such luxuries. His cabin is over there in the woods. It was a wagon track we followed in, well part of it.

DAVID looks at the night sky listening to his father. There might be some useful information about the area he can use.

MARK (CONT'D)

He had to break sixty miles or more from the nearest trading post.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

Under those conditions you travel light and live by your wits. He probably had to fight off Indians or other men who wanted this place too.

DAVID lay there, ridged, shoulder bones and hips rebellious against the earth. He rolls on his side looking at his father.

MARK (CONT'D)

He had to catch fish, hunt down game, find edible plants or starve.

Mostly the old-timer thrived on solitude and silence. That's not for weak men; they need neighbors, noise and the comforts of the city.

DAVID knew when he was being taught a lesson. He couldn't resist the temptation to deflate it.

DAVID

We've got a neighbor. And I bet he's a nice guy, too. He fishes with worms. So anyhow there is another way in here after all!

DAVID'S secret was out.

MARK scrambled out of his sleeping bag.

MARK

What guy, you saw somebody around here?

DAVID

I saw the place where he was digging for worms. You didn't. You went through the mud.

MARK gets all the way up now and builds another fire in the ring of rocks, sorry now he'd used water on it. He had a fire blazing in moments. The fire glowed on his concerned face.

MARK

Tell me from the beginning- what did you find? A hole of some sort? How deep?

DAVID got up a bit and leaned on his elbows. He grew interested, this was really bugging old MARK.

DAVID

It was a big patch with all-over digging like a garden spaded up.

MARK

You saw spade marks? Sharp cuts?

DAVID

More like with a fork- a pitch fork, I guess.

The fires ruddy light streamed off MARK'S lean flanks. For a log moment he looks off and down the valley. The stars were scattered all over the sky like chip of ice.

David crawled out of his bag and stood there in his blue and red stripped pajamas looking where his father looked.

Then MARK walked over, bent down and picked up his sleeping bag.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Where are we going? Somewhere else?

MARK

I've decided we'll sleep in the truck tonight, after all.

DAVID

So there is another way in?

MARK

(worried)

No. No there isn't. Below here and to the east and west of us the real wilderness set in. The wildest stretch of country in the state of Colorado.

DAVID

And no neighbor or anything?

MARK lifted the other bag and chucks it into the pickup.

MARK

I did not say that.

48 INT/EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - PICK-UP - CAMPER - LATE NIGHT 48

DAVID is in a dream. The tick of the clock is as soft as the padding, pads of bare feet, not coming strait on, but circling.

He lay in the grip of the same old terror, but even in his dream he is somehow conscious of MARK asleep beside him. So this must be someone else who stalks through the grass...

DAVID struggles to wake up and escape it. Slowly the hard bed of the truck comes into reality beneath him, the sleeping bag, the unfamiliar pillow. But still it seems he hears the whisperous footfall. Opening his eyes he startles wide awake. A white brilliance is streaming in his face like a spotlight. The moon, a lopsided three-quarter moon, is shining in the window brighter than he'd ever seen in his life.

Still dazed he sits up and peers out the window. Half expected to see somebody out there moving across the meadow. But it lay deserted under the moonlight. After a while he sank down shivering into his bag. Not that he was going back to sleep...

49 INT/EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER- PICK-UP - CAMPER - GRAY MISTY DAWN 49

MARK

Wake up David. Daylight's coming on. Best time for fishing.

DAVID groggily crawls out of his sleeping bag, finds his clothes. Grumpy and sore he follows MARK out into the gray dawn.

A mist lays over the valley. Wisps of it rises off the river like slow steam. The hard cold of midnight has changed to a softer wetter kind of chill.

50 EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - 50 GRAY MISTY DAWN.

MARK and DAVID huddle in their own coats across from each other by the fire pit. The fire hasn't taken hold well, smoking and sputtering.

DAVID

Should I go look for some dry wood?

MARK

(sharply)

No. We have enough. Anyhow it wouldn't be any drier.

MARK is restless this morning, as if he thought something might happen. Hunkered down on his heels he makes coffee quickly, spilling the stuff into the water, spoonful after spoonful.

MARK (CONT'D)
About today.

MARK Cocks a critical look at DAVID.

MARK (CONT'D)
You say you're not very good at
athletics?

DAVID
I usually get a C, but I got a B in
manual training. I like doing
things with tools.

MARK
Well good, but right now I'm more
interested in your physical
condition.

DAVID
I can do ten pushups.

MARK
How fast can you run? What's your
time in the hundred-yard dash?

DAVID
Fourteen seconds. I never got the
knack of starting quickly.

MARK
Ever play baseball? How is your
arm? Can you peg a straight throw
while on the run?

DAVID
(gloomily)
I'm only a substitute, I don't get
much practice at fielding.

MARK snaps a stick in two and tossed the pieces on the fire.

MARK
How good are you at climbing trees?

DAVID was getting unnerved at all the questions but asking
about climbing a tree brought a memory back like a piece of a
jigsaw puzzle.

DISSOLVE TO:

51 EXT. BIG PINE TREE - SOMEWHERE - PARK - DAY 51

Back when DAVID was little he remembers a big pine somewhere in a park and his mother and father were there. MARK puts DAVID up on the trunk above his head and DAVID climbs up, clenching the trunk he pulls up with his arms, a little afraid of the height he does not look down. DAVID scraps the inside of his arms, hands and bare legs climbing the trunk.

Past the trunk to the first branch Six-year old DAVID feels the rough bark on the branches as he climbs them like a ladder and goes higher. To DAVID it was high, but in reality it was a small pine no more than twelve feet.

DAVID feels a weakness in his hands, slips again and drops a couple branches and skins a knee hard on the trunk. Missing the hold of a branch he falls out of the tree sliding off a branch. He hits the ground, and his mother is there.

JEANNE

He's too young, Mark! He could kill himself!

And then his mother picks DAVID up, holding him tightly.

BACK TO:

52 EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - 52
GRAY MISTY DAWN.

It all came back to DAVID like a flash in the second he hesitated over his father's question.

MARK

(impatient)

Put it this way: Do you think you could climb a tree if you wanted to?

DAVID looks around and doesn't see any he could manage.

DAVID

I'd better not, sir. Mother doesn't like it.

Abruptly his father takes the pot off the fire and pours the boiling coffee into their cups.

MARK

Just above here, there's a big swampy area. I've seen moose there many times.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

A cow moose protecting her calf can run the hundred in somewhat less than fourteen seconds.

DAVID watches his father take a sip of the coffee. He tries the coffee himself but it was so hot, it burns his lip. He will let it cool but he holds it in his hands warming his fingers.

MARK (CONT'D)

If one was charging, you might wish you could throw a rock straight enough to hit it and try to distract it. And if you couldn't make it up a tree, that might be the last race you ever engaged in.

DAVID worries, he should have practiced climbing trees. He tries to sip the coffee again, and gets a couple of swallows down. Quickly he feel the warmth spreading in the pit of his stomach.

MARK (CONT'D)

I need you to think where we are. It's not like the city out here.

DAVID nods as the pretty strong drink warms his belly. He continues drinking the coffee and thinks of what his father is saying. Plus he is amazed about the hot coffee. He gazes into the dark liquid.

DAVID (V.O.)

I know I am not in the city. It was your plan to bring me here, and now you are trying to scare me...(sipping more coffee)... Why had mother never allowed me to drink coffee. This was the kind of thing you need on a cold wet morning. Especially if somebody is goading you.

MARK

You understand?

DAVID

I reckon there's a lot of wild animals around here. Bears and mountain lions and-

MARK

(nodding)
You got the right idea.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

The world is full of dangers. This
afternoon we'll take this up again.

MARK stands and pitches the dregs of his coffee.

CUT TO:

53 EXT/INT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - GREY3
MISTY DAWN

DAVID watches his father get out the rods and fly boxes.

DAVID (V.O.)

If I have to shinny up and down
pines, this is going to turn into a
rough day.

MARK is unlocking another box, a heavy metal one bolted into the corner of the truck bed. Opening it, he takes out a revolver in a holster and begins to work his belt through the loops.

For some reason DAVID is reminded of stories of old-time gunmen, vigilantes who took the law into their own hands. His uneasiness swells as MARK draws the weapon from its leather case.

DAVID is hypnotized by the ugly beauty of the thing. He had never seen a gun this close before, its cold blue metal and a wicked-looking grip. That round hole in the muzzle looks big as a cannon.

DAVID

(nervously)

Is that a police pistol?

MARK

Much more powerful. It's a .357
Magnum.

Also from the metal box MARK pulls a smaller cardboard box. He shakes some bullets into his palm. Gleaming like little missiles, they have a deadly fascination too.

DAVID stares as MARK fed them into the cylinder of the gun.

DAVID

What do you need it for?

MARK

Just say I feel better with it on.

DAVID'S mind raced.

DAVID (V.O.)
 Better? Walking around, carrying
 such a dangerous thing? He hadn't
 worn it yesterday, before I told
 him about the neighbor. I was glad
 of another presence in the valley,
 but now seem ominous somehow.

It was clear MARK was troubled too though he was trying not
 to let on.

MARK
 (carelessly)
 By the way, where did you say the
 digging was?

DAVID
 Down there where the ground gets
 real wet. Only back, away from the
 river. Halfway over to the trees.

MARK
 Wait for me here. I think I'll take
 a look.

MARK walks off into the mist. His shadow is seen for a bit.

54 EXT. MEADOW - CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - DAWN. 54

The fire made a small pinch of warmth in the vastness of the
 grey dawn's fog. DAVID stands close to it, stamping his feet
 to get the blood back into them. His shoes were soaked from
 the wet grass- every blade strung with droplets. Around him
 out there in the haze the valley seems to crouch, waiting.
 Even the mutter of the river is hushed in the ghostly white
 of dawn. DAVID felt frightened.

DAVID squares his shoulders and shoves his hands in his
 pocket, staring out into the mist. In a minute he hears the
 heavy swish of rubber boots and made out the tall figure of
 his father striding across the meadow.

MARK comes up to the fire.

MARK
 Just about what I expected. This
 neighbor of ours is the four-footed
 kind. The digging was the work of a
 bear. Looks like it was done a week
 ago or more. Nothing to get jittery
 over. That bear is probably miles
 away by now.

DAVID stands there wide-eyed, this news adds to his uneasiness.

MARK (CONT'D)
What's the matter, don't you believe me?

DAVID
Yes, sir. Only what would a bear be digging up?

MARK
Oh, field mice, gophers. Grubs maybe. This time of year, right after hibernation, sometimes they eat roots.

DAVID
Roots? What kind of roots do bears eat?

DAVID was really not expecting an answer. MARK was on edge and spat back.

MARK
Hell if I know! But their usually in a bad mood, too. So saying that, he might just still be around.

MARK hunkers down on his heels again, and pours himself a cup of coffee. And takes a sip thinking.

MARK (CONT'D)
You don't climb trees or can run very fast, so I think you'd better do your fishing close by.

DAVID
Yes, sir.

MARK
Stick near the truck so you can get inside in a hurry if you see a wild animal coming.

DAVID nodded in agreement. It is fine with him! It will put off the moment when they'd have a fuss about wading into the water.

DAVID
Whatever you say.

David pours himself a cup of coffee. It felt good in his hands. He drinks the hot liquid and looks about the meadow both of them lost in their own thoughts.

DAVID (V.O.)

Not that I am taken with this "bear" story. But if there is nothing to worry over, why is Mark still wearing the gun? And telling me to stay here. This whole thing is a lot different than yesterday.

Mark's whole manner is different this morning, edgy and watchful. He repositions the gun on his hip.

MARK (V.O.)

I don't want to scare the boy, but he needs to be warned. All I need to do is get my boy hurt out here in the wild. If something happened I would have no chance to mend fences with Jeanne and put our family back together again.

DAVID thinks of the plan.

DAVID (V.O.)

So the plot about his father sneaking away and deserting him, if there was one must have been called off.

MARK

I don't recommend you use flies. I'm going to, but there probably aren't any insects out yet on a day like this. Until the sun burns the mist off, you'd best stick with spinners and bait.

DAVID felt shammed.

DAVID (V.O.)

Is father hinting that flies are too tough for him?

It stung him a little, but he tried not to show it.

DAVID

Reckon I'll dig some worms.

MARK

Certainly, if you like. But I'd advise you to try devil-scratchers first. They're the trout's natural food.

MARK doused out the fire again and heads to the back of the truck.

55

EXT/INT. MEADOW - PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAWN

55

As MARK put a fly on his line he kept glancing around, off upstream, then across the river.

MARK

Now then, here's your rod. Have you used this kind of casting reel before. It's made by Garcia. There's a swivel already tied on the end of the line.

DAVID smiled looking at the very same type of reel he had back at home.

DAVID

Yes, sir. It's the same as the reel grandpa gave me last summer. He taught me how to fish. I still need to work on my casting though.

MARK

Jeanne's father is a good man. He is a great outdoorsman. I'm sure you could have learned a lot from him. Then I won't waste any more time explaining how the automatic reel works. Later on today I can show you the knack of casting.

DAVID

We fished in the town lake. I remember a little, to get my bait as far out from shore as possible.

MARK

Same here on the river. Remember to keep a tight line on your fish. Don't hurry him. Once you've landed one, hit it on the back of the head with a stick, or against a rock. Kill it fast, don't let it chock to death on air. That's not sporting.

As DAVID watches his father disappear into the fog, heading off downstream.

DAVID
Kill it... hit it on the head...?

DAVID never had caught a fish before, but he wasn't going to tell MARK that. When fishing with Grandpa he mostly watched, and when his Grandpa had one hooked, he handed the rod to DAVID, and before he got the fish in, it got away.

DAVID(V.O.)
I have never really thought about what I would do once I did catch something. Not that I'm especially fond of fish, but just to kill a thing...?

DAVID suddenly wasn't in to much of a hurry to start. He stares down at the tackle box open on the tailgate of the truck. He mumbles and complains.

DAVID
Ought to put one of those darn flies on, just to show Mark. All this fuss he was making, over what?

DAVID picks one up to examine it.

Who ever heard of a real insect with a pink silk body and a collar of brown fuzz?

He put it back, better not mess with it. He fingers the two other spinners in the box. They are big, fancy, bright pieces of brass with red beads and neat little swivels on the end.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It would be my luck to toss one out and tangle it up on a rock the first cast.

He laid the sinners aside on the tailgate and rummaged through the loose stuff in the box until he found a bare hook, the kind you put bait on.

Taking the shovel and one of the bean cans he leaves the camp.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Now for some worms.

56 EXT. EDGE OF RIVER - OPEN SPOT - MISTY MORNING

56

DAVID looks for a place free of undergrowth where he could start a hole. There is an open spot up ahead. When he reaches it, he stops short!

DAVID stops to examine the clods more closely. The ground was fresh. Loose wet earth clings to the grass roots.

He straightened, shivering a little. The truck looks so far away in the mist. All around him the meadow lay silent and smug with secrets. For a minute he just stood there.

DAVID tried to shrug it off.

DAVID
(whispering)
Maybe I'll just use one of those
spinners after all.

DAVID didn't rush back to the truck, but walks a slow steady pace. Inside he is taunt as a wire.

57 EXT/INT. MEADOW - PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAWN.

57

For a minute DAVID stands looking at the junk on the tailgate, puzzled. Because he was certain he had left the sinners right there beside the fly box. Now nothing, except these pebbles, two little round stones! Picking one up, he turns it over. Just a plain old rock. But it hadn't been there before. In a sweep of panic he throws it far out into the river.

Desperately he tries to calm down, and laugh at it. He stands there like a nut, with the other pebble clutched in his hand.

DAVID
But I was in sight of the truck the
whole time. Somebody would have had
to crawl through the grass. Father
wouldn't pull a silly trick like
this. And yet the spinners couldn't
have vanished all by themselves!

It occurs to him that a bold sort of kid would just find out what this was all about.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Maybe it's some looney old geezer
slinking around the woods. Somebody
ought to see what he's up to.

The thought of it made DAVID'S spine creep. Sissy... the old word slithers through his mind like a snake. He puts the tackle box away in the camper, laid the rod inside, and closed the tailgate. He looks around and MARK is nowhere in sight. He knows MARK will not approve of this.

DAVID (CONT'D)

All right, I will! Because if it hadn't been for me looking around, he wouldn't have known about the digging either. And he seems to think that was important.

The fog is lifting as pale yellow light is eating through from the sun, a burning spot above the rimrock. He can make out the faint profile of the towering cliff. He turns to start across the meadow.

58

EXT. OPEN MEADOW - MORNING

58

As DAVID goes across the meadow, a breeze begins to blow and scatters the vapor fast. Coming to the wagon road, he backtracks along it. The cabin MARK has mentioned would be the first place to start. But as he continued he had to bolster his courage.

DAVID

Nervous, You're always getting nervous. Don't be a dope. Big people never hurt kids. The most this old guy can do is yell at you. Besides he won't see if I don't make any noise.

Overhead the sky is a vivid morning blue now. All around the trees are still dripping. A giant dragonfly veered past DAVID'S head, darted into the woods and hung there. Motionless, it hovers right in front of a doorway.

It is the cabin. In a little clearing the old place lay asleep under the soft fall of sunshine. Caved in roof and a chimney still stands, but it had been a sturdy dwelling once. The aged wood beams had been shaped with an ax. The roof had covered in sod, old dry grass still clings to the timbers.

DAVID walks over to it cautiously, with pine trees poking out of the roof from the inside, it was clear no one had lived here in a long, long time. For a minute he stands listening, one hand warming on the sun-drenched wood of the door-jam. A peaceful place. Nothing made a sound except the come-and-go breeze that gently moves the pine branches up above.

And yet DAVID is aware there is some other presence nearby in the forest. Everything stood still inside him, and he held his breath. There! He hears it- a fretful little cry. With an effort of will power, he made himself venture on past the cabin, deeper into the woods, keeping the sight of the cabin over his shoulder from time to time.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You could get turned around in this forest and never find your way out!

DAVID pauses, the sound is hard to locate, a strange, breathless whining. He can swear it comes from somewhere overhead. Then suddenly there it was, a face peering down at him! With a gasp he draws back.

A dark face with big black eyes watching him through the crotch of a tree. Then it turned aside as if embarrassed to be discovered. DAVID sees a long, furry muzzle and a wet black nose. A bear cub!

As the bear cub let out another complaining little cry DAVID begins to laugh inside. He felt weak all over, laughing silently, warm, in relief.

Clumsily the baby bear crawls through the crotch and sat there, an unhappy bunch of tawny fur with one foot hanging. Squirming, whimpering, it looks down at DAVID, then up at something higher up in the tree. Another one! The second cub was even lighter in color, almost a silvery blond. It is far out on a branch, walking along unsteadily. DAVID fears it might fall as it climbs down to join its brother. They squeezed into the crotch together.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You two look like kids on a park bench while your mama's gone shopping. She must have told you: Stay right here till I get back. I don't know how to tell you though?

The cubs are all fidgety, squabbling, and snapping at each other.

DAVID glances around, but there is no sign of the mother bear. This is what MARK had on his mind. The reason to stay close to the truck. It came over DAVID that he'd been gone quite a while.

The old fear stirs inside him as he remembers that this time he had really disobeyed instructions.

Hurrying, DAVID takes a short cut through the woods. He picks up a few sticks, to give himself an alibi, just in case.

59 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - EDGE BY TREES - LATE MORNING 59

As he came out into the open meadow from the forest edge, he sees that he is too late. MARK is already at the truck. No doubt about it his father is mad. DAVID heads off across the open meadow to their camp charring some wood for the fire.

60 EXT. CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - LATE MORNING 60

MARK is furious, the kind of anger that can burn like dry ice.

MARK
(lips hardly moving)
I assume you went quite a distance.
You were gone long enough.

DAVID
(mumbling)
Just thought I would get some wood.

Mark glances over by the fire-pit. There is plenty of wood stacked there.

MARK
(tersely)
I like to get the truth.

DAVID
I wanted to go see the old man's
cabin!

MARK
You recall, I told you to stick
near the truck?

DAVID
Yes, sir, but I thought-

David's throat was furry, he couldn't go on. It is the terrible look that MARK is giving him, like a judge.

MARK
If anything happened to you out
here, with me, there'd be the devil
to pay.

MARK looks off to where DAVID came out of the forest.

MARK (CONT'D)
I've undertaken a responsibility to
see no harm comes to you.

MARK throws up his hands looking right into DAVID'S eyes.

MARK (CONT'D)
Of course I assumed you'd been
taught to obey. Here in wild
country you're not really old
enough yet to decide for yourself
what is safe and what isn't. So in
the future will you kindly do as I
ask?

Mark turns and looks off to the river.

MARK (CONT'D)
Oh, you don't have to fish if you
have such a distaste for it...

DAVID snatched up his rod and headed for the bank of the
stream, his face flaming hot.

61 EXT. EDGE OF RIVER - OPEN SPOT - DAY

61

Boiling with helpless resentment, DAVID kicks over some of
the rocks in the edge of the water. On the underside of one a
crawly thing wriggled and tried to slither away. He grabbed
it and jammed it onto his hook and tossed it out into the
water.

DAVID
Fishing- what a bust!

DAVID stands there, ridge with rebellion, until his fingers
began to ache from gripping the rod so tightly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Supposed to be all this fun they
talk about. Instead it's a rotten
test.

DAVID shifts his hands and as he did he jerks the rod and
froze. There is something on the end of his line! To make
matters worse, he has hooked a fish.

With a confusion of emotions he stares at the ripples that
fan out like a 'V' where his line cut the water.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It must be a small one. Not big
enough to prove anything- Oh boy,
just a poor darn little fish that
had been minding its own business.

DAVID let the automatic reel wind in, hanging on to the line with one hand so it would not come in too fast. He wished the fish would get free.

When he had it close to shore he feels it struggle a couple times. He could see the fish now, quivering down there in the shallows, a delicate sliver of life.

DAVID shutters in sympathy with the trembling of the small fish. He see the fish flash by the surface.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(miserably)
Well, your big enough to eat. At least a harsh man like MARK might think so.

He hears his father coming, walking up through the grass, he tightens with defiance.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I won't, I won't kill it!

Never has he hated anyone so much, as he hated MARK now. DAVID continues to talk to himself, whipping his emotions up into a frenzy.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(whispering ranting)
So darn...darn...ready. And mean. Underneath you can feel his meanness about to come out! Brutal in everything. Hit it on the head with a stick!

He hears his father now coming closer, walking up through the grass, he hears more plainly the boots swooshing through the tall grass.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(talking louder)
What would he do if I didn't obey him? Pick me up and chuck me into the water?

The notion came whispering from deep from DAVID'S mind, jumping back into the past.

SLAM CUT.

FLASHBACK:

62 EXT. LAKE - PICNIC AREA - SWIMMING AREA - DAY

62

All from DAVID'S POV.

MARK

Best you learn how to swim right
boy, you six now! It's sink-or-swim
time!

MARK lifts his son out of the water and tosses DAVID further out.

MARK (CONT'D)

Now kick your legs, get on top of
the water!

DAVID slaps around going nowhere, but unaware he is actually staying afloat and above water.

JEANNE

(screaming again)
He can't swim Mark!

DAVID sees his mother rush into the water with her clothes on while yelling at MARK.

MARK turns back to his wife.

MARK

He's got to learn to swim!

At that moment, DAVID stops paddling and kicking and sinks under the water. He can hear the muffled shouting of his parents above.

Under the water, something down in the deep touched him. It was not just sea-grass wrapping around his legs. It was some underwater sea monster grabbing a hold!

This makes DAVID panic. He kicks and paddles in the muck, in the unseen deep, going nowhere again, held tight by the creature below.

CUT TO.

BACK TO SCEN.

63 EXT. EDGE OF RIVER - OPEN SPOT - DAY

63

Terror rose in DAVID'S throat as he stares at the current, swirling, slipping around the rocks, glossy as grey silk.

His father is behind now and DAVID turns as if in a dream. The man looms over him, fixing him with those fire-blue eyes.

Blindly, DAVID throws down his rod and runs. Plunging, tripping over rocks, tearing loose from the sticky bushes that snatch at his legs- it is like the nightmares. He lunged on and on, the wind stinging his eyes to tears.

MARK

David! David!

Mark was coming after him. DAVID is in full flight and panic mode.

DAVID

The gun- he has a gun!

A sharp crack like a shot split the air and DAVID goes down. Flinging himself forward into the meadow grass he tries to burrow under it. Then lay still. It is no use, the thud of feet is right on top of him.

MARK

Are you hurt?

The hand that touched his shoulder is light. The grip grows firmer, making DAVID sit up.

MARK (CONT'D)

(face grim with wonder)

No, you're just, scared stiff.

DAVID is starring at the gun, still in the holster.

DAVID

(whispering, shaking)

There was a shot.

MARK

Was there?

MARK hunkered down there beside him, eyes squinting beneath their brows.

MARK (CONT'D)

Did you think somebody was shooting at you? Who?

DAVID

(surprised he can still think)

The Neighbor, you know, the old geezer.

DAVID pretends to look around for somebody else. Dazed, he sees that they have come a long way upstream.

64 EXT. RIVER - FLAT WILLOWY SWAMP - SEVERAL CHANNELS - DAY 64

MARK

Have you caught your breath?

MARK helps him up.

MARK (CONT'D)

Then come on. I'll show you what you heard.

He leads the boy over to the nearest arm of the stream. It is clogged with dead brush which has dammed it so that the water has backed up into a big pool.

MARK (CONT'D)

(softly)

Hear that?

DAVID listens, and makes out an odd chattering. It seems to be coming from a pile of sticks heaped in the middle of the pond.

MARK (CONT'D)

Beavers. The old lady's giving the kids their orders to stay close to the house. You frightened her.

DAVID

I didn't know.

MARK

(dryly)

That shot you heard was her tail smacking the water, warning the others to hit for home.

DAVID stands, trying to take it all in. He struggles to shake off the lingering fear.

MARK (CONT'D)

You can figure it all out later. Right now we've got a fish to attend to.

DAVID

(drained)

Yes, sir.

Together they go back down river.

65 EXT. EDGE OF RIVER - OPEN SPOT - FISHING POLE - DAY 65

Back at the open spot, the rod, still lying with its tip in the water.

DAVID
I kind of hopped the little fish
had gotten off.

But it hadn't. Just gone close to the bank, trying to hide in the root there. DAVID picks up the rod and gently draws it out of its shelter.

MARK gets hold of the line and pulls the fish in. MARK talks to the fish in that curt, chopped-off way of his.

MARK
Got in trouble, eh? Didn't look
that bait over very well, did you?
And you not much bigger than it is.
Maybe you'll learned enough to keep
alive awhile.

Putting his hand in the water, he scoops up the small trout, holding it carefully. Looking to DAVID he goes on.

MARK (CONT'D)
A wet hand and a loose grip don't
squeeze a fraction more than you
have to, to hold on.

As gentle as a nurse picking a splinter, he backs the hook out of its mouth. Lowering the fish into a quiet spot in the water, he holds it upright to help it get its balance.

The small fish hangs there motionless as if it can't believe its good luck, then darts off in a spasm of freedom.

MARK stands up, all the smile is gone from his face. He looked tired.

MARK (CONT'D)
But what am I doing this for? To
show off, maybe? I guess that's why
I asked you out here.

He takes the rod from DAVID. And hooks the hook on a metal loop on the rod.

MARK (CONT'D)
No reason why you should like to
fish, or camp out, or anything
else. I should have never begun
this experiment.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

Of course I didn't dream you'd be so afraid of me. I'm sorry. Let's go home, David.

DISSOLVE TO:

66 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - DAY 66

DAVID walks at MARK'S elbow, heading for the truck. Full of mixed-up feelings knowing nothing is going to happen. They were going home.

Tumbling across the meadow, a breeze blows a piece of paper against DAVID'S knees. Automatically he catches hold of it. It is a piece of a torn grocery bag.

Mark eyes it a second, then swings around looking out across the quiet meadow, nothing there.

MARK

Oh-oh, that's our grocery bag!

Abruptly he breaks into a trot, heading for the truck.

DAVID begin to hurry too, without knowing why.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - DAY 67

MARK

I left the pan of bacon and eggs on that stone.

To the side they see something black out in the grass. It is the frying pan, overturned and empty. DAVID goes over to get it then follows MARK over to the pickup.

68 EXT. MEADOW NEAR RIVER - PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAY 68

Around the pickup there is more stuff scattered everywhere. Broken eggshells, corn meal all over the ground. The bread wrapper is caught on a bush nearby, but the bread is gone. The box of sugar is spilt wide open.

MARK walks over to rescue the coffee and which has spilled with all the rest.

MARK

(irritably)

My fault.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)
Should've known better than to
leave things unwatched with a bear
around.

He begins to gather up the bits of eggshell.

DAVID talks nervously, not really thinking of what he is
saying.

DAVID
I wish I could have seen that mama
bear ripping into the groceries.
After she'd had to eat old mice,
the bacon and eggs must have tasted
great.

MARK
What makes you think, it, is a
female?

DAVID ignores his father's question. He kicks around the
grass around the truck.

MARK (CONT'D)
We could have used a big slather of
bacon and eggs ourselves, now that
I'm taking you home.

DAVID
Do you reckon it left anything?

MARK
When they're hungry they'll sniff
out every scrap of food you've got.

DAVID
But maybe not that tin of meat in
my overnight kit!

78 INT. PICKUP - DAY

78

DAVID climbs in the back of the pickup. The interior is
tossed like a hurricane had hit it. He looks everywhere, but
his canvas bag is gone.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's not under my bedroll or
anywhere in here, just vanished!

69 EXT. PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAY

69

DAVID climbs down out of the pickup and starts across the
field searching.

DAVID

That bear must have smelled my chocolate bar inside it. Probably took the bag off a little way to rip it open.

MARK

(cross)

Come back here boy, unless you want to change your mind about climbing trees.

DAVID doesn't shrink at his father's cross tone. Moseying back to MARK'S side.

DAVID

I don't know how it would help much to go up a tree. Bears learn that when they're just little.

MARK

(curtly)

I'm not worried about a bear cub getting you.

DAVID

But can't big bears climb too?

MARK begins to roll up their sleeping bags.

MARK

Oh, yes they can. Yes.

He pounds and pulls at the sleeping bags as if he really didn't want to do it. It is clear he hated to have to leave the place. It takes an effort to answer DAVID'S question.

MARK (CONT'D)

Except for grizzlies, all bears have the ability to climb. But they seldom go up a tree in pursuit of somebody.

DAVID

Why not grizzlies?

MARK

Their claws are not sharp enough.

DAVID

I read a book about grizzly bears somewhere, in the book it said, they are the most dangerous of all.

MARK

The book is right. Sharp claws or not!

They continue to pack the truck to leave.

MARK (CONT'D)

A grizzly can't retract its claws when it walks. A black bear can pull its claws in, just as a cat does. The grizzly's claws stick out ahead of its foot all the time, so they're constantly being worn off on the ends.

DAVID hands a few more item to Mark.

DAVID

So, when they leave a track you could tell what kind of bear it was.

MARK

Sure you could. By the time it's grown, the grizzly get too heavy for the blunt claws to support it climbing trees. However, they can still rip open an elk with one swipe!

DAVID

I guess there aren't any grizzlies around here?

MARK

They keep to the high country. You'd find some up there.

MARK glances toward the cliff. As he stands there for a minute, staring off at it, there is a look in his eyes, a distant look like a wish.

DAVID watched his father and it makes him uncomfortable for some reason. Grown people aren't supposed to care a whole lot about things. He feels a twinge of regret about having to leave this place himself.

MONTAGUE OF SHOTS: WIDE SHOT OF VALLEY. THE CAMPER SO SMALL IN THE OPEN MEADOW. THE EDGE OF THE WOOD AND THE RIVER. THE CLIFF TOWERING OVER IT ALL. THE VALLEY IS WARM AND FRESH SMELLING UNDER THE WARM AFTERNOON SUN. TWO BEAR CUBS PLAYING IN A TREE...

71 EXT. PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAY

71

DAVID

Do black bears ever have brown cubs?

MARK is chucking the bed rolls into the back of the pickup.

MARK

Of course. It's a general term, covers black, brown, cinnamon. Are you ready?

DAVID

I can't find my overnight bag. I bet the bear got it.

DAVID begins to poke around in the brush. Not thirty feet from the truck. There he comes across a wet patch of earth with tracks leading across it.

Squatting down for a better look, he can make out the print of a broad heel and five big pads, and a couple of inches ahead of them, five gashes in the earth. He stands up suddenly and catches his breath hard.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(softly)

What color is a grizzly?

For a long minute MARK didn't answer. He just stood by the tailgate, looking toward the river. At last he is roused.

MARK

What?

DAVID

I just wondered, a grizzly is kind of brown, isn't it?

MARK

Their fur is dark at the roots, lighter on top. That's why they're called silvertip.

DAVID
 (to himself)
 And their faces are dark.

MARK does not notice. He is still hesitating, staring out across the valley, his short blond hair blowing in the breeze, his eyes deep in shadow.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Maybe we ought to stay here a little longer.

MARK
 (shaking head)
 When a thing is over, it's over.

But still he pauses, looking around him like a man who's leaving a place and not coming back.

DAVID
 Don't you think we ought to try to find my overnight kit?

72 EXT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - DAY

72

MARK brushes the question aside and goes to get into the truck. Then he stops again, and glances towards the river. Then walks to the front of the pickup and raises the hood. Taking off the radiator cap, he feels inside.

MARK
 It seemed to be heating up a little on the way over. I think I'd better put some water in.

DAVID notices the change in MARK'S voice. It is the same one when he is making up a good excuse. As he watches his father, it struck an odd sympathy in him. He realizes MARK wanted to take one last look at the river.

Mark goes back and gets the coffee can and heads for the river. He slogs along through the grass with his shoulders sloping.

DAVID
 I know that walk. So many times I have scuffed along, wanting to kick something and bust it to pieces. I know it comes from being disappointed.

DAVID looks at himself in the truck's window.

DAVID (V.O.)
I hate people who disappoint me!

He frowns looking at his image. Realizing why he felt sort of guilty.

DAVID (V.O.)
Because this time I am the one who
has made someone else feel this
way.

73 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - DAY 73

As DAVID turns it over and over in his mind he begins to drift away from the truck into the open meadow.

He wanders a bit, when his eye catches on something blue-and-white in the bushes, he stares at it for a minute before he realizes that it is his own pajama top!

He picks up the snagged garment and he examines it. Talking to himself again.

DAVID
Not much harm done. The bear must
have dragged the kit clear over
here to the edge of the woods,
opened it up, and pulled the stuff
out.

DAVID glancing around, thinking to see the bag close by. Then something made him hold dead-still and listen. It is the premonition of somebody hiding around the corner.

UNDER THE STRAIGHT-DOWN NOON HEAT THE WOODS LAY BREATHLESSLY QUIET. EVEN THE BREEZE HAS DIED. AND YET THE LEAVES MOVED...

74 EXT. BEYOND THE EDGE OF WOODS - NOON 74

Far back where the heavy shadow is crossed by thin shafts of sunlight, something walks. Bright speckles slip and slide along a furry shoulder, a long curving back.

75 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - NOON 75

DAVID stands rooted, but oddly, he wasn't so frightened now.

DAVID
 (whispering)
 I just hope the mother bear will
 come out in the open a minute so I
 can get a good look at her.

The bear is far enough off that he didn't feel any danger.

In a minute he catches another glimpse, of a heavy neck that thrust through the underbrush. She is moving at a long, swinging pace that will bring her out of the woods a hundred yards below him.

DAVID abruptly turns his head, it occurs to him it will put her between him and the truck. He realizes he has wandered farther than he'd meant to.

Just to be on the safe side, he begins to move cautiously towards the river. His thinking is to go in a wide circle back to the truck without coming any closer to her.

But too late she is already there on the verge of the forest.

Instincts grip him, and he stands rigidly still.

76 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - OPEN MEDOW - NOON 76

The bear at last, slowly steps out into the meadow. A huge bear, her fur has a dark undercast but the surface is pale as if it has brushed with light frost. *Silvertip!* The bear raises a massive head, gloss with sunlight, and searches for scent upon the air.

77 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - NOON 77

DAVID risks a look towards the truck, he see his father there now, standing frozen beside the open hood, still holding the coffee can as if he has forgotten it. Even at this distance he looks thence as life-and-death.

DAVID focus back on the bear. But still he isn't too worried. She seems so calm to him, and he smiles liking this bear.

78 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - OPEN MEDOW - NOON 78

The bear now settles back comfortably on its haunches, making a breathy noise, and at once the two cubs come scrambling through the grass to her side. Gathering them onto her lap like any mother, she lets them nurse. As they squirmed and nuzzled her, they growled with pleasure, almost like the purring of cats.

79 EXT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - NOON 79

MARK is making little short motions with his hand that means
"Find a tree and climb it"

80 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - NOON 80

DAVID begins to back away, and edge off toward the forest a
 slow step at a time.

He still is not panicked, it is clear she doesn't see him.
 Besides, she is far enough away. In fact, she is closer to
 the truck than to him.

Still to be ready if he has to, he glances over his shoulder,
 trying to spot a tree that looks possible to climb. The
 nearest ones are either too big or the limbs begin to high off
 the ground.

81 EXT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - NOON 81

Sweat trickles down MARK'S temple, his eye's are bright and
 aware. They flash between the big she bear and his son.

His right hand slowly drops down to his gun.

He watches the bear intently, never taking his eyes off of
 her.

He unhooks the thong holding his gun in the holster.

82 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - NOON 82

DAVID spies a tree, one with a stub of a broken off branch.
 As he sizes it up, its needles begin to shift in a slight
 current of wind that touches DAVID'S cheek, like a invisible
 hand, that goes on to smooth down the meadow.

83 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - OPEN MEDOW - NOON 83

The wind reaches the bear, and her head came around cat-
 quick. Sweeping the cubs from her, she rears, unfolding out
 of the deep grass to rise, taller and taller. Powerful front
 legs curved like a fighter's, she stands, the great head
 swinging as she sniffs the air.

84 EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - NOON 84

DAVID knows she sees him now. She seems to bristle with sudden fury. Unable to tear his look from her, he can't move!

MARK (O.S.)
Run, DAVID! Run!

DAVID is running, the forest jarring in front of his eye's, his ears pounding, or is it a roar? It sounds close behind.

He flings himself at the nearest tree and tries to scramble up it by sheer strength. But can't get his knees around, he just clings their stuck, a couple of feet off the ground.

85 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - NOON 85

Mark is on the run and fires his gun into the air in the direction of the bear.

86 EXT. WOODS - NEAR RIVER - PINE WITH SNUB BRANCH - NOON 86

DAVID hears the sharp crack in the silence, a shot.

DAVID
Don't shoot her!

He tears away from that tree to run on. Blindly he pelts through the brush, almost crashes into another tree, the one with the low snub of a limb. Up on it he leaps for the next branch and monkeys his feet up over it fast. He hauls himself up lightly with a thin scorching strength he'd never known before.

87 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - NOON 87

MARK is still on the run, ready to kill if he has to. Still out of range to be accurate with the big handgun.

MARK
(yelling)
Higher! Go higher!

88 EXT. WOODS - NEAR RIVER - PINE WITH SNUB BRANCH - NOON 88

DAVID squirms upward through a tangle of pine boughs.

IN ONE SWIFT GLANCE DAVID SEES THE GRIZZLY COMING BY LONG LEAPS. MARK IS RUNNING AFTER HER. HE RAISES THE GUN TO SEND ANOTHER SHOT INTO THE AIR.

DAVID skins free of the boughs and climbs out onto a sturdy limb just in time. The tree shakes violently, and he looks down into a snarling face.

Up she lunges, her long forelegs reaching as if they were hinged on rubber. For one petrified instant he thinks she is going to keep stretching.

But the claws dig into the tree just inches below him. Mad black eyes glower at him, then she grudgingly sinks back onto all fours. In the bark of the tree she has left white gashes.

89 EXT. MEDOW - EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - NOON 89

MARK
(strangled voice)
Are you alright?

DAVID (O.S.)
Yeah!

And then MARK'S heart flips over. The bear turns with that awful quickness eying him. He backs up now, smoothly, half crouched, trying to look like part of the field.

90 EXT. WOODS - EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - NOON 90

The grizzly lets out a low bellow and moves after him lunging forward. She breaks free of the edge of the woods.

91 EXT. OPEN MEDOW - NOON 91

MARK in a full run himself heading for the truck.

The grizzly roars again breaking into a bounding gallop.

MARK lifts the gun again and fires once more, this time directly at the bears head as he runs.

The bullet whizzes past the bears head. The grizzly checks its stride an instant, reared, then with another roar she broke into a dead run, lengthening out long and thin as a race horse.

92 EXT. WOODS - NEAR RIVER - PINE WITH SNUB BRANCH - NOON 92

DAVID holds tight to the branch. He had a good view from his perch. And he clinches tight inside, because MARK is not going to make it!

He hangs to his tree helplessly. He wants to close his eyes, but can't.

Across the field the grizzly goes with a wrenching speed that brought her closer to MARK with every leap.

93 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - PICK-UP - OPEN HOOD - AFTERNOON 93

The grizzly and MARK are almost to the pickup, but for the running man there is no time to open the door. MARK flings himself down headlong, he rolls under the truck just as the grizzly crashes into it!

For a minute she claws the metal as if it were alive. She tears off the side mirror with one blow and smashes one of the turning lights to bits!

Then drops to all fours she begins to circle, nosing beneath. She can't see under it too well on account of the deep grass, but she keeps lunging out with one arm like a cat trying to sweep a mouse out of its hiding place.

MARK rolls away from her, to this side and that, as she keeps pacing around the truck.

Once she stops restlessly to look toward the edge of the forest. Worrying about her cubs, she starts over that way, then she whirls back and pounces back at the pickup with startling swiftness.

As she stalks around it, she is deadly quiet. Only lets out a low growl once in a while, whenever she takes a slash at MARK.

Now she is standing up to glare into the open engine. She see the man below on the ground, her hair springs up on her chest and she plunges a big front paw down past the motor. Snarling she crams her head and shoulders under the hood, trying to reach him.

Suddenly there is a sharp, crackling sound, a shower of sparks shot up out of the works. The grizzly leaps backwards with a *whoof!* The noise comes again, more sparks.

She's had enough and she bolts away. Galloping towards the forest, she calls the cubs, and they rushed out to her, and all of them plunged into the deep undergrowth. There is faint crashing, then everything is still.

94 EXT. WOODS - NEAR RIVER - PINE WITH SNUB BRANCH - AFTERNOON 94

DAVID holds his breath, and shutters. There is no sound from MARK.

DAVID
 Maybe she got him... Maybe he is
 just lying there. Or else why
 didn't he shoot?

The meadow is quiet as a park. The only sound DAVID can hear is the distant gurgle of the river, but worst of all, there is no sign of MARK.

Craning as far out as possible, he scans the forest, but the bear is nowhere in sight. His worry over his father averts the fear of the grizzly. DAVID needs to get over there, though what he will find...

Cautiously he swings down out of the tree.

95 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - PICK-UP - OPEN HOOD - AFTERNOON 95

VIEWS AROUND THE PICKUP, SHOWING THE DAMAGE INFLICTED BY THE GRIZZLY. UNDER THE PICKUP NOTHING MOVES.

96 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - AFTERNOON 96

DAVID moving half crouched, close against the deep grass, he keeps a sharp watch on the woods. When he is nearly to the pickup he straightens and runs the rest of the way.

Now he can see the crushed front door where she had gone into it like a fright-train. All over the sides are long scratches that gleam in the metal.

97 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - PICK-UP - OPEN HOOD - SIDE - AFTERNOON 97

DAVID
 (yelling)
 MARK. MARK!

(beat)

Right at the pickup he finally sees and hears movement under the truck.

Awkwardly his father works his way out. Lying on his back he inches and shoulders free, sturging up unto his elbows and pulls himself a little farther, enough to sit up. His clothes are torn, his face chalk-white.

MARK
(looking around)
I wasn't sure she was gone.
Couldn't see.

He sat there not out from under the truck yet, taking one deep breath after another.

DAVID
Are you okay?

MARK glances down at the long scratch on his arm that shows through the torn sleeve of his shirt.

MARK
That was some scramble.

DAVID crouches down beside him, and wonders why he just sits there with his legs under the pickup.

DAVID
What happened? I saw lots of sparks.

MARK
I cut the wire to the horn and shorted it out on the truck. Made fireworks right in her face. I recon, she'll tell her grandchildren about that one.

Stiffly he begins to drag himself out further.

David chokes. MARK'S left pant leg is ripped to shreds and bloody, and blood all over his shoe. Through the matted sock it is swelling, streaming down bright red on the grass.

MARK (CONT'D)
She got a piece of me once.

He states, then cut it off short.

MARK (CONT'D)
Good grief, boy don't pass out!
I'll need your help.

He fumbles in his pocket and hands DAVID a key.

MARK (CONT'D)
In the strongbox you'll find some
first-aid supplies.

98 EXT. PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAY 98

DAVID in a glazed shock rushes around to the back of the camper and manages to get the chest unlocked. Under the ammunition and fishing stuff he finds a box with medicines and clean rags in it.

MARK (O.S.)
Bring a bottle of drinking water,
too.

99 EXT. OPEN MEDOW - PICK-UP - OPEN HOOD - SIDE - DAY 99

When DAVID gets back with everything he sees MARK has cut off the tattered Levis at the knee with his knife and has taken a strip from them to make a tourniquet around his leg. He twists it tight with a stick.

MARK
I hope she didn't cut a tendon.
(muttering he washes the blood off)
I can't move my foot much.

MARK cleans the wounds. All cleaned it looks terrible. Her claws had sunk into the muscle of his calf and raked downward. The whole ankle is a rugged mess.

DAVID watches his father douse the raw flesh with antiseptic. He has to swallow hard to keep his stomach in place.

MARK can hardly do it, the sting of it gets to him and his hand starts to shake. Handing the bottle to DAVID.

MARK (CONT'D)
(clenched teeth)
You do it.

It takes all of DAVID'S gumption, but he pours the stuff on quickly until the whole wound is covered.

MARK (CONT'D)
Now make a pad out of those rags.

Mark is trying to sound normal, but his words are strained.

DAVID

Does it hurt?

It strikes MARK funny, and he lets out a raspy laugh.

MARK

Ah, ah, ha.

MARK takes the bandage and presses it to the torn leg, then begins to fasten it on with adhesive tape. Around the calf, the ankle, then down under his instep and up and around again, as tight as he could make it.

MARK (CONT'D)

It needs some stitches, but this'll have to do for now... (glancing up in a different tone) This could have been you. If she hadn't checked stride when I fired that first shot in the air, you'd never had made that tree. That's what got me unnerved.

DAVID

I know. It's my fault! I shouldn't have gone so far, but I didn't know they could run so fast.

MARK

That's finding out about bears the hard way, with her snapping at your rump.

MARK'S tight-drawn lips suddenly twisted in a short smile, enough to show that there is no hard feelings.

MARK (CONT'D)

Lord, wasn't she beautiful, though? I'm glad I didn't have to shoot her.

DAVID

Where you going to?

MARK

I drew a bead on her as she was chasing you. It would have been risky, you were in my line of fire. Then you were up and safe, thank God. But when she almost had me I let that last one fly right past her ear. (strained chuckle) I guess the old-gal never heard the whizzing of a bullet before...

DAVID

But while she was clawing at you,
why didn't you shoot her then?

MARK

A mother with cubs?

MARK cuts the rest of the ragged leather off his boot so that only the sole is left. He tapes this onto the bottom of his foot and hands the roll of adhesive to DAVID.

MARK (CONT'D)

Put the box in the back of the truck again, but keep it handy. If... (matter-of-factly) If I should black out, don't get excited. Just hold that bottle of ammonia under my nose. Now give me a hand; let's see if I can stand on this.

DAVID

(hurriedly)

Listen, maybe I could learn to drive so that you won't...

But MARK is getting up, hanging hard onto the truck and gripping DAVID'S arm.

MARK

No use worrying about that yet.

100

EXT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - DAY

100

Stiffening with pain at every step, MARK makes his way to the front of the truck, but the effort seems to sicken him.

He hunched over the radiator.

MARK

I think... I... could use a pot of coffee.

DAVID

The coffee got spilled. Yon know...

MARK

Oh. Yes I forgot.

DAVID is about to start for the ammonia.

But MARK shakes his head. Standing a little straighter, he leans over to poke around the engine.

It now dawns on DAVID that the bear might have damaged something under the hood. The air filter seems to be a little smashed. He touches it gingerly. It's half its normal size.

DAVID
Do you reckon that's busted?

MARK
It's not serious. But the old gal sure made spaghetti out of the electrical system.

Mark is staring down at a tangle of torn wires.

MARK (CONT'D)
She got her claws hooked through them. When I startled her she almost took the whole works with her. Nope. (he let out a long unsteady sigh) Nobody's going to be driving for a while.

DAVID starts to worry about getting out of there. His thoughts stretched back over the narrow trail that twisted away through mile and miles of woods to the nearest road.

DAVID
Can you fix it?

MARK
Only the Lord knows.

DAVID
And if not?

MARK rubs his eyes as if they were hazy.

MARK
Funny, your mother was always worrying, always afraid some disaster would overtake us, off like this, in some lonesome spot. Something we couldn't get out of. It'd be a joke on me, if she turned out to be right.

MARK gets busy on the repairs to the electrical system untangling the mess of wires.

101 EXT. PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAY 101

David put the first-aid stuff away as his father has asked and sits on the tailgate wiggling his legs back-and-forth. He looks off to the tree.

He hops down and listens to his father working in the truck's motor compartment. David wants to go to that tree again.

DAVID
(whispering)
It's like I have some unfinished
business there.

He moves to ask his father if it was O.K, But decides not to. MARK seems to be feeling worse than he wanted to let on. It is strange to DAVID to think of anybody that strong being so shaken up.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Of course anybody can get wounded,
I can't picture MARK acting just
naturally, as if it hurts. I
suppose by the time I get back He
would be himself again.

DISSOLVE TO:

102 EXT. WOODS - EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - DAY 102

When he reaches the trees, DAVID hesitates, peering off into the deep stretches of the forest. But he can tell the fearsome spell was over. The birds and squirrels moved about. He ventured in heading for the tree.

103 EXT. WOODS - NEAR RIVER - PINE WITH SNUB BRANCH - DAY 103

DAVID looks up at the limb he'd been perched on, for the first time he realizes how tall that grizzly was. Seeing how high her claw marks, are way high on the trunk.

He leaps up for the snubbed branch, and it takes him a couple tries to get a hold of it. Once there he just hangs there, no strength to pull himself up at all. He drops back to the ground puzzled by the whole thing, and heads back.

DAVID
(quivering)
She was really big, and fast!
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

She made me fast and strong too,
like some magical juice turned on
inside of me, that abled me to get
up there so fast.

104 EXT. WOODS - EDGE OF WOODS - NEAR RIVER - DAY

104

He is heading back to the truck at a trot when stumbles onto his overnight kit. The green canvas bag was caught under a brush near where he had found his pajamas.

There is a slash in the side, but the rest of the contents hadn't been disturbed much. He looks through the bag, the chocolate bar along with the tin of meat were gone.

But what was there was a small round pebble. It gives him a start. Uneasily he glances around, but the forest still sounded cheerful.

Turning the stone over in his fingers DAVID still can't figure this mystery out.

DAVID

There must be some good explanation
for it, but I have no time to worry
about that now.

Holding the torn kit so the clothes would not fall out, he heads back to the truck.

JUMP CUT TO:

105 EXT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - DAY

105

MARK worked under the hood, his face is slippery with sweat, although the day isn't really that hot. Bending over the engine he grumbles to himself. When he see DAVID he speaks irritably.

MARK

Where you been?

DAVID

Just over to the woods for a
minute. I found my bag.

MARK

And risking your life again?
Haven't you learned anything from
all this?

DAVID
I'm sorry if I was gone too long.
Did you need me to help you?

MARK pulls his head out from under the hood, and stretchers his back.

MARK
(sarcastically)
I need the Ford motor manual.

He delves back into the engine again.

MARK (CONT'D)
Look under the front seat, if you will, and see weather you can find a roll of wire and some friction tape.

106 EXT/INT. PICK-UP - FRONT SEAT - OPEN HOOD - DAY 106

DAVID tosses his bag on the front seat of the pickup, and bends in looking under the bench seat. There is all kinds of stuff under there, but he finds the wire and something that looks like black adhesive tape. He rushes back to his father.

107 EXT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - DAY 107

DAVID
Is this it?

MARK nods vaguely.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Do you want me for anything else?

MARK begins to peel the insulation back off the end of one of the broken connections with his knife.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(carefully)
I mean, I thought maybe I ought to go fishing.

His father roused out of his concentration.

MARK
You thought what?

DAVID
Were going to need something to eat.

MARK

You stay right here! (wide-eyed)
That's all we need, to have you get
caught out again by that bear.

DAVID feels quiet looking at the ground.

MARK look up uncomfortably, fiddling with the tape.

MARK (CONT'D)

It's not your fault, DAVID, none of
this is. But if anything should
threaten you now I couldn't do
anything about saving you. That
grizzly could be back here any
minute.

DAVID

I'd watch for her.

MARK

What good would that do if she
between you and the truck?

DAVID

Well I could get down in the river
I can swim.

MARK

So can she. For the love of Pete!

DAVID

I could float down and get to those
reeds, and I'd pick one and duck
under water and breath through it.
She couldn't even see me.

MARK

That sounds like something out of a
book.

DAVID feels himself blushing. He stands awkwardly watching
for a while.

MARK Finally, as if the silence was making him edgy, he
paused his work again.

MARK (CONT'D)

I know you're hungry. I can't do
anything about that, either. But I
guess I don't have any right to
keep you from trying for food.

DAVID looks up and listens to MARK.

MARK (CONT'D)

Go on, then, but stay right by the big rock on the bank. If she shows up, well, you might not hear me call. I'll fire the gun. Don't waste time getting back.

Almost before the last word was out, DAVID started off.

108 EXT. RIVER - NEAR BIG ROCK - DAY

108

DAVID is at the edge of the stream, surveying the mysterious face of the water. He ready's his gear. His old attitude about fishing is swept away.

DAVID

(amused at himself)

The deal with the little fish, kill it, smack it on the head with a rock... That seem so long ago now, and mixed up with my blind rebellion against MARK.

He walks up to the edge of the water, looks upstream, then downstream.

DAVID (CONT'D)

This is different now. To stand here alone, knowing it is up to me to get some food. I know what I need to do, I just hope I can catch a good one.

DISSOLVE TO:

109 EXT. ACROSS THE RIVER - LOOKING AT BIG ROCK - DAY

109

The river slips by and the boy fishes from the far side of the bank. He is diminished by his surroundings.

Here the river lies flat flowing around rocks out in the water, and trailing a few bubbles behind the stones. But against this shore there was a swift current where a few foaming rapids churned around a few large boulders.

The trees are thin on the boys side opening out to the grassy meadow behind. Seen there is the pickup where his dad works on the damage engine.

The forest is alive with chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, and birds of all types. All chattering away making the most of the day.

A fox moves causally with her young pups, as a doe and her fawn keep hidden in the woods with the mother deer eye's on the young human across the river.

110 EXT. RIVER - NEAR BIG ROCK - DAY

110

For a while DAVID holds the rod so strongly his hand aches. His eye's are strained from peering at the spot where the line disappears into the swirling water. He leans forward, tense. But nothing happens.

DAVID

I guess that the bait might be gone.

He reels the line in to look.

DAVID (CONT'D)

No, the worm is still there, soggy, wriggling. I'll put it back in, I guess.

He let it back out again into the current. Poised, ready to jerk back at the first touch of a bite, he stands there, seeming like hours. DAVID gives himself a talking to.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I might do better if I waded just a little way out in the stream. But that's not going to happen.

He repeats the process with the rod, checks the bait, tosses it back in.

DAVID (CONT'D)

All the buff talk about swimming had only been to impress MARK... Gosh, even the lapping of the water at my feet make me slightly sick.

He was not having any luck. But he remembers seeing Mark whipping the line back over his head and casting forward so that the hook fell far out in the water.

He decides to try it. DAVID flips the rod, and the line comes flying out of the water right at him. The worm hits him smack in the face.

He has such a spasm he almost loses his footing in the wet grass. He gets everything tangled up in a mess.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 I guess that only works with a fly
 rod. I should of known better.

He gets himself untangled and tries again more cautiously.
 This cast is better, but as his hook arches out over the
 stream, the bait comes off.

He scrambles around to find another big crawler, and hooks it
 on. He tosses it back out into the current again.

Waits a moment or two, then pulls it back and tosses it out
 again. Seeming to loose his patience, he get frustrated, and
 on the third cast his bait is gone again.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 I know I'm just being clumsy! But
 this morning I was not! Some kind
 of magical strength I never knew
 was in me, it burst forth and I
 flew up that tree!... I was sure
 and not clumsy at all!

He reels in his line and hooks the hook to the rod. He was
 hungry and disappointed not catching a fish. He turns from
 the river and heads back to the truck.

111 EXT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - DAY 111

DAVID arrives back at camp, and MARK is nowhere in sight.

112 EXT/INT. PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAY 112

DAVID comes around the back, and see his father sprawled on
 the floor of the truck bed.

MARK appears to be passed out. One knee up like he was
 crawling towards the first-aid box. The bandages on his foot
 is soaked through with blood.

DAVID
 Mark?

DAVID scrambles in bending over his father. He had never seen
 anybody unconscious before. Shocked, his father didn't look
 fierce any more. There are tired lines around his eyes and
 mouth.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 It looks as if the life is draining
 out of him...

In a panic DAVID glances at the injured foot.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I know people can bleed to death...

He pulls himself out of the grip of frozen alarm.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Mark!... Father!

DAVID quickly tore a strip off the edge of the ruined Levis, just as MARK had done, and tied it below the knee.

There was a screwdriver on the floor. He garbs it up and pokes it through the knot and begins to twist the cloth tighter until the skin pinched up.

With one of the rags from the first-aid box he wraps the whole thing around so it won't unwind.

He remembers the ammonia, then, uncorks it. He holds it under MARKS noise but nothing happens. Very cautiously he turns his father's face a little so he can hold the bottle closer.

But when he touches the white cheek he gasps, to find it so clammy cold. In a rush DAVID put his hand under MARK'S shirt, and feels the slow pump of a heart.

MARK'S whole body seemed to be chilly, so DAVID works feverishly to get his father warm. He tears at the buckles on the sleeping bag to undo them, and shakes out the bedding to full length, spreading it on the mattress.

Then awkwardly, nervously, catches the limp figure under the arms and hauls it onto the bag. He begins to pile on blankets and the other bag.

He is looking for more when he glances at his father's face. MARK'S eyes are open, not too clear yet, but coming back.

MARK
What...? I must've passed.

DAVID
Your foot's bleeding. I put the thing back on your leg. What else should I do?

MARK struggles to form words.

MARK

Go out, scrape up all the coffee
you can find...don't worry if
there's dirt...boil
some...strong...

DAVID

What about your foot?

MARK

It can wait.

DAVID

But?

MARK

Please, David...

MARK closes his eyes again.

The sun is behind the mountains as DAVID jumps down out of the truck, and twilight is settling in fast.

The great cliff above the valley is golden with light. A softer brilliance than yesterday. And the evening is warmer. With the wind coming up the valley, out of the south.

DAVID faces the quiet and dreadful reality as he scrapes the coffee from the ground.

DAVID

(mumbling to himself)

We're in serious trouble...Miles
from nowhere...truck conked
out...no food. And Mark is so far
gone...he must be out of his head.
All he can think of is a cup of
coffee!

DISSOLVE TO:

113 EXT. CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - END OF DAY 113

DAVID pours from the coffee pot into a mug boiling hot coffee. It is muddy and has grass in it.

JUMP CUT TO:

114 INT. PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - EVENING 114

MARK has hitched-up to his elbows. DAVID is trying to help, and hold the cup steady.

MARK drinks some of the stuff, chocking on it a little. Then garbing DAVID'S hand under the mug he tips it so he can guzzle the rest down.

DAVID digs out the electric lantern. It is getting gloomy in the camper. He finds the light switch, and pale metallic light shoot out into the corners.

DAVID
About your foot...

MARK
I can't feel it at all. It should be hurting like the blazes. Better take the tourniquet off.

DAVID stares at him aghast. His father obviously has no idea what he is saying.

MARK (CONT'D)
Well, boy...go on...

DAVID
Yes, sir. Only you don't know. I mean it was bleeding pretty badly.

MARK
Then get a pillow.

DAVID gets a pillow and goes to raise his father's head.

MARK (CONT'D)
No, no, the feet...under the feet...

DAVID is uncertain, his father must really be delirious.

MARK (CONT'D)
Better give me another shot of that coffee.

DAVID tries to refuse.

DAVID
Mother says it's not good for a person.

MARK'S eyes flare wide. He squirms.

MARK
Who's calling the turn here, anyhow?

DAVID swallows hard.

DAVID

You aren't very well, sir,
and...and...

MARK

And you think you know best?

Angrily MARK start's to sit up, but can't make it.
Helplessly, lay staring at the roof of the camper.

MARK (CONT'D)

I guess, I am in no position to
argue. If you want to take over, go
ahead.

DAVID

I really don't have much to go a
head on. I just thought I'd bandage
your foot again.

DAVID moved towards the first-aid box. From behind him MARK
speaks again in a remote voice as if he was drifting off to
sleep.

MARK

One thing... That generator...I
doubt if you can rewire it.

DAVID looks back over his shoulder, but his father's face had
no hint of humor in it.

MARK (CONT'D)

So my advice...for what its
worth...is that you start walking
out of here come daylight. Take the
gun. Twelve miles of forest...could
be dangerous.

DAVID

And what would you do?

MARK

By then it...won't matter.(no
emotion) If you take off the
bandages now...open up the wound
again...I'll lose some more blood.
Maybe too much. Of course, there's
the tourniquet. But if you leave
that on, gangrene will set in.
Flesh rots...

DAVID stares at his father, motionless, MARK'S words sinking
in.

MARK (CONT'D)

Anyhow, if I don't get another shot of hot coffee I may not pull out of this shock. That'll be that.

MARK stares up at the ceiling.

DAVID feels embarrassment cover him with prickles. With clumsy haste he unties the tourniquet, and lifts the injured leg onto the pillow.

MARK (CONT'D)

Both feet...raise them both... Now the coffee David.

CUT TO:

115 EXT. CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - NIGHT 115

David sits the warm coffee pot back on the coals. Waiting for it to boil, again he accuses himself.

DAVID

It's what you get for trying to be responsible and think at all. You end up acting like a dope. Any confident feeling I had earlier today that was just a silly idea too. You're nothing but a dumb kid! And that's what Mark is thinking right now.

The coffee sizzles up the spout and boils over.

JUMP CUT:

BACK TO SCENE:

116 INT. PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - EVENING 116

DAVID climbs back into the truck again, he'd give anything not to have to touch his father. He brought the coffee pot with him.

He braces marks shoulder's and helps him drink. Swallow by swallow, downing the hot brew as if it were medicine.

Silently DAVID pours another cupful. And this time he feels the warmth begin to spread back into the lanky frame against him.

MARK seems to be pulling himself together by sheer will power. As he lays there he is getting some color back. His eyes were in better focus, studying DAVID.

DAVID felt the stare, uneasy and unsure if he had done or said anything right. At last MARK speaks.

MARK

Thanks. Thank you, for helping out so quickly. When a person is in shock, its like a cramp. You're whole body is constricted, you don't get enough circulation. Best remedy is a stimulant. Lot of coffee. And plenty of blankets. That was good thinking to cover me up.

DAVID sits back, taking in what his father is saying. He takes a deep breath.

DAVID

I'm sorry I tried to... I mean, I'm sorry I didn't do...

MARK

(making a jester)

Forget it. Better close the tailgate, and drop the window.

DAVID finds the tailgate to hard to pull closed from the inside. So, he hops back out, lifts the gate and shuts it. He climbs over the gate back inside, and pulls the window down.

DAVID

I didn't catch any fish either. I thought, I mean, I know I should have asked you how.

MARK

Don't know why you should put any faith in what I say. I couldn't even keep a bear from stealing our bacon.

MARK is feeling better and drinks a little more coffee.

MARK (CONT'D)

This whole business has turned out to be a pain in the neck, and a good deal of it is my fault. Never figured it could happen to me.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

When you've been used to counting on your muscle, you assume that if you ever get hurt you'll just keep going somehow, like the heroes, on TV, staggering along, pretending it doesn't bother you much. It's pretty unsettling to find out, when the time comes, that you can't. A while ago I barely had enough sense left to lie down before I fell down.

DAVID

(questioning)

I reckon you'll feel better tomorrow...?

MARK

I've darn well got to... It's going to take all we both can do...to get out of this spot.

Out of the shadows DAVID watches the man, this stranger he had driven off with yesterday. Still something giant about him, like the brooding figure of the nightmares, only laid out helpless in the lantern light.

DAVID notices a dark spot that was coming through the blanket where it covered MARKS torn foot.

DAVID

You were ready to get yourself killed. And all for me? Why?

MARK

(small low laugh)

When a man has a son...

117 EXT/INT. PICK-UP - OPEN MEADOW - CLOSED TAILGATE - NIGHT 117

The Moon is rising behind the cliff. Up there on the rim of rock a lone pine tree stands black against the glowing brilliance.

DAVID watches the night sky glowing radiant behind the cliff, through the window of the camper.

Then there is a piece of the moon itself, burning like a bubble of white fire. It swells, bigger and bigger, until it burst free, and rises flooding the valley with light.

DAVID lay there keeping watch over his father, wide-eyed looking at the top of the camper, thinking about the day.

DAVID
 (whispering)
 I looked into the eyes of a
 snarling grizzly, holy smokes!

The quiet is broken by a faint sound. Far away, high on the air, it came fitful like a baying pack of ghost dogs racing down the sky. A shiver runs along DAVID'S spine.

Out of the darkness MARK speaks.

MARK
 (softly)
 That's an eerie cry, it always
 makes me restless.

DAVID
 What is it?

MARK
 Wild geese. Heading north.

For a minute they lay there until the distant cry of the honkers had faded.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Proud lonesome birds, driving head-
 on into cold skies to get far from
 civilization as they can, to bring
 up their young in a secret place...
 I have always envied them. (he
 stirs and sighs) Maybe that's
 what's wrong with me.

MARK rambles on in a feverish voice.

MARK (CONT'D)
 I've sometimes been looked upon as
 a screwball, for whating to get off
 by myself. Never cared much what
 other people thought. Now I wonder.
 (bitter) Any other father is glad
 enough to sit around the house,
 read the sports pages on a Sunday.
 Take a nap. Go for a picnic in the
 park...

There is silence for a moment DAVID looks at the ceiling thinking he needs to talk.

DAVID
 I remember going on a picnic once
 with you and mother.

MARK

Yeah me too. But that didn't turn out so well. Your mother would never forgive me how I treated you. She wouldn't talk to me for a week!

DAVID

I think she thought I was too young to learn to swim.

MARK

No, it was the my gruff ways she didn't like. My sink or swim teaching technique, trying to make you learn out of instincts or panic... Sorry I scared you!

DAVID

I don't think it was you so much, as it was the seaweed wrapping around my angle that sent me into a fit...

MARK

There's a movie with John Wayne, called *Hondo*. In it Hondo tosses a kid out in a pond...okay for a movie but not in real life.

DAVID

I've seen that movie many times with mother. It's one of her favorites... I can swim now. It's no problem.

MARK

That's just it, it is a problem, I didn't think it through. Now we are in a real fix, no fault of your own. It's like I just threw us into a valley of bears to see if we can swim or not! Not the way a father should act. Again, I am sorry David.

DAVID

(changing subject)

Mother and I went on a picnic once. We took a drive one Sunday. We ate chicken sandwiches' at a roadside rest. It was nice of her to plan it. But it wasn't a whole barrel of fun. She hadn't liked it much, either.

MARK

I think she hates the outdoors...

DAVID

No, It was the mess. There'd been a lot of trash that other people had thrown around.

MARK

(unhappily)

On a family picnic it should be fun. After eating they play some games together, like badminton. Don't they? Isn't that what a kid pictures for a father. Some guy who'll wash the car in the summer and shovel sidewalks in the winter?

DAVID is silent for a bit, not knowing how to answer. But he didn't want this first real conversation to slip away. He blurts out a question.

MARK keeps fidgeting in his blanket.

DAVID

What did your dad do?

MARK goes dead quiet. He seemed to stop breathing for a minute.

MARK

(sounds careless)

My father? I grew upon a ranch. Money was short, there was no time for anything but work. Pa was a hard-handed man. I learned a lot from him, especially how to duck.

DAVID

He licked you?

MARK

Licked? Did he, more like beat me. I remember once when I'd just gotten thrown twice by a roan colt. It was a mean horse. I couldn't see much point getting on it again.

MARK laughs, but you could hear in his voice it wasn't really funny remembering.

MARK (CONT'D)

Pa took a length of hose and got on that horse, beat the tar out of it, rode it to a flat-footed standstill. Then he got off and whaled me with the same hose. Couldn't lie on my back for a week.

DAVID rolls over onto his belly uncomfortably.

DAVID

I heard of this thing before from other grownups. Talk about the whippings they got when they were kids, as if it were the best thing on earth that could happen. They'd always finish by saying, Yes, sir, my folks raised me right, or something like that.

With DAVID'S face half muffled in the bedding.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You think that's right?

MARK

When I was young, I was afraid of Pa. I knew there was no kindness in him. Later on I plain hated him for what he'd done for my mother.

DAVID

Did he hit her too?

MARK

No, but I'm not sure, never in front of me. I don't remember any bruises. She never gave him an argument though.

MARK pauses for a moment, there is a ring of pain in the words, spoken so harshly out of the darkness.

MARK (CONT'D)

I never heard her say but a few words at a time. After years of his bullying she wasn't even a person.

DAVID

It the pain in your foot getting worse?

MARK

No, not the pain in my foot, but from the memory. When I was sixteen she died, only thirty-six years old. I left home the next day, never went back.

DAVID

I had no idea, mother never talks about your childhood.

MARK

It wasn't the kind of childhood you think about with pleasure. Or talk much about. But I think it was a lesson of sorts.

DAVID

But your telling me now?

MARK

Well, you faced down a grizzly today, and that means something. One more thing. I swore no kid of mine would be afraid of me. How wrong could I get?

Even after MARK stops talking the words echo in the nearness of the camper. After a long moment DAVID turns in his sleeping bag.

DAVID

In the movie *Hondo*, the kid learned to swim...

A long silence follows.

He was ready to say more when his attention is snagged.

118 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - FULL MOON - NIGHT 118

Something moves unseen through the grass on the valley floor. A current of south wind moves through the open meadow.

119 INT. PICK-UP - CLOSED TAILGATE - NIGHT 119

Inside the pickup DAVID feels the wind eddying through the camper, the smells of new grass and spring leaves. A soft breeze, and yet all at once it made his heart leap against his ribs. He starts to move, and scramble up in a hurry.

MARK'S hand touches DAVID'S shoulder in the dark.

MARK

Easy.

Cautious, they lay back their blankets and sit up. Looking out the small window, at first glance the meadow looks deserted under the torrent of moon light.

DAVID freezes, there'd been no huge jagged stone out there before! Perring hard, he makes out the silhouette of a long back, curving up to a great hump of a shoulder from which neck and head thrust forward.

DAVID

It's her!

MARK

No! Too big. That's the old man.

MARK fumbles with something under the blankets.

DAVID heard a little click and looks over his shoulder to catch a glint of light off metal. His father is checking the .357 Magnum. He leans over to whisper in DAVID'S ear.

MARK (CONT'D)

If he gets the scent of blood, he could smash his way in here. If he tries keep behind me. He'll be tough to stop, even with this.

120 EXT. PICK-UP - OPEN MEADOW - NIGHT - FULL MOON 120

The grizzly is coming toward them at a slow walk, all moving light and shadow. Nearer and nearer, nosing the air.

When the bear is only fifty feet from the truck, it pauses and looks sharply towards the woods. Half rising on its hind legs, it stood like a giant sculpture edged in silver.

121 INT. PICK-UP - CLOSED TAILGATE - NIGHT 121

DAVID can see now that this one had a longer stride, more powerful hunches. The heavy mass of shoulder fur ripples in the moonlight.

And then MARK and DAVID both see too, a second furry shape starting out of the shadows of the forest.

DAVID

Is it her?

MARK

Must be. She'd never let another bear stay around these parts, not with those cubs. She won't even welcome the old man.

122 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - NIGHT - FULL MOON 122

The grizzlies move towards each other warily.

Over the meadow there lays a awful hush, as if even little creatures in the grass must crouch, afraid to move.

On a shifting breeze comes a low whining, growling sounds as the bears seem to bicker across twenty feet of space.

Like gunfighters they stare each other down, the closeup of their eyes is unsettling, although the same but fiery different.

They both stand on their haunches extending to full height. The smaller of the two growls a warning, the old man doesn't seem to care, and snarls back.

The big male bear takes one more step forward.

And she leaps, like a spring uncoiling!

They slam together in a terrible clutch of mingled snarls and snapping jaws. Teeth flash, claws slice through the air, eyes blaze!

The two monstrous shadowy hulks reared and wrestled and bit in a swift battle across the field.

As the fight continues they head directly for the pickup.

123 INT. PICK-UP - CLOSED TAILGATE - NIGHT 123

MARK watches from the window of the camper, the two beasts tangle and roll for a moment heading straight for the pickup.

Sheltered in the truck, MARK grips DAVID'S arm, ready to yank him back. But the two fighters veer past.

124 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - NIGHT - FULL MOON 124

The bears stand up like boxers again pushing against each other. The male takes another swipe, but misses leaving his shoulder bare.

The mother bear sees an opening to his shoulder and strikes in seconds with mashing teeth.

A snap and crunch is heard and the old man roars again. But the smaller grizzly, furiously drives the male away.

He yields a few steps to her, and a few more. Then wheels and lumbers off a hundred feet.

For a moment the two stand off from each other. The female stands ready for more.

The big male grizzly, sullenly licks his wounded shoulder, then moves on down the valley.

She watches after him, and finally satisfied that he is going, she stalks back into the shadows of the forest.

125

INT. PICK-UP - CLOSED TAILGATE - NIGHT

125

MARK draws a long breath, and finding the lantern he switches it on.

MARK

That was close.

DAVID

Could he have really gotten in here?

MARK lit a cigarette, but his hands are not too steady.

MARK

That bear could crumple this light aluminum shell like tinfoil.

DAVID

But why was she so mean to him?

MARK

Protecting the cubs. Not all animals are born to be good fathers.

MARK sinks back onto his bedding. He has a strange look in his eyes, the trick of the lantern light makes them look bright-hot.

MARK (CONT'D)

The male grizzly is apt to hurt his young. She always drives him off. A wonderful, unfailing instinct.

DAVID

Yeah?

126 EXT. WOODS - EDGE OF WOODS - RIVER - NIGHT 126

The mother bear splashes across the river where she is reunited with her cubs, and they all head off into the dark shadows of the night.

127 INT. PICK-UP - NIGHT 127

MARK is going on in his disconnected way.

MARK

These wilds...one reason I come out here. It gives me cleaner air, you see things that you couldn't before. All my life I have taken risks, maybe worse ones than I thought.

DAVID rolls on his side facing his father, listening to every word.

MARK (CONT'D)

Whenever I'd read about somebody being hurt or killed I always figured they must have been careless. Or foolish. Now I'd be inclined to give'em the benefit of a doubt. Oh I'd still take the chance. To me it is worth it.

He knocks the ash off his cigarette, tapping it on the inside of the truck.

MARK (CONT'D)

But to put in such danger. I should have my head examined!

DAVID had listened, but couldn't say what he wanted to say. After the awful time that morning, so much has changed since then. Before he can put the word together. MARK adds eyeing DAVID wearily.

MARK (CONT'D)

Don't be too upset, David. Try to get some sleep. He won't be back tonight. In fact if he has any sense...(crushing out his cigarette angrily) he'd head for the high lonesome country and stay there.

Long after the lantern had been turned off, DAVID lies there thinking about those last words. Because he realized MARK hadn't been talking about a bear.

It is a restless night for the two of them. DAVID with his thoughts and MARK dealing with the pain. Sometime near dawn they both got a couple of hours of fretful sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

128 INT/EXT. PICK-UP - CAMP SIDE - FIRE PIT - BEFORE DAWN 128

MONTAGUE OF EARLY MORNING SHOTS; THE AIR IS COLD AND CRISP, THE GREY DAWN SPREADING OVER IT. DAVID WAKING UP, CHECKING HIS FATHER-STILL SLEEPING, CLIMBING QUIETLY OUT OF WINDOW OVER THE TAILGATE, BUILDING A FIRE, LIGHTING IT WITH ONE MATCH, HEATING WATER IN THE COFFEE POT. HE KEEPS LOOKING BACK WHERE HIS FATHER IS SLEEPING - WORRIED. FINALYY DAVID HEARS HIS FATHER MOVING IN THE CAMPER.

MARK

Well, I'm still here.

DAVID OPENS THE TAILGATE AND TAKES THE HOT WATER IN THE COFFEE POT TO MARK.

DAVID

All we have, but it's hot.

MARK IS STIFF AN ACHES ALL OVER, HE GLADLY ACCEPTS THE HOT WATER. HE POURS IT INTO A MUG, TAKES A SIP, AND SAVORS THE TAST.

MARK

Thanks David, the best breakfast you've made so far. I know you're hungry so I won't try and stop you from trying to fish. Stay on the bank and use the bait rod.

DAVID

You'll be okay here alone?

MARK

Yeah, I'm going to sleep a little more I don't feel so great. You keep an eye out for the bear and if I signal, you come a running.

DAVID

Yes, sir. Maybe if I'm lucky, and catch one, It'll make a better breakfast.

DISSOLVE TO:

129 EXT. THE VALLEY SHOTS - MEADOW - CLIFFS - RIVER - DAWN 129

MONTAGUE OF SHOTS: WIDE SHOT OF VALLEY. THE CAMPER SO SMALL IN THE OPEN MEADOW. THE EDGE OF THE WOOD AND THE RIVER. THE DARK CLIFF TOWERING OVER IT ALL. SMALL SPECK IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL, DAVID HIKES ACROSS THE MEADOW TOWARDS THE RIVER.

DISSOLVE TO:

130 EXT. RIVER - BIG ROCK - DAWN 130

DAVID sits on the big rock, legs a-dangle, holding the rod, line trailing off downstream. DAVID stares into the swirling dark waters. The deep dread is still there, it hasn't changed.

DAVID

So much else has changed. My mind has turned upside down. This deserted valley... I hated just the night before. Now, it is somehow part of me, like a wish.

He drops the tip of the rod into the water. Thinking of all that has happened.

DAVID (CONT'D)

But now we have to leave. I will probably never come here again. I will hate to leave this new world I have found.

Fervently DAVID looks about and begins to memorize: the cool sweep of the grassland with the rough-and-tumble river playing through it, the forest on every side, and the cliff over there shouldering up against the glow of the sun.

He focuses his attention on the cliff as the sun's first rays light up the lone pine tree. Then his view jogs downward to a sloping skirt below the cliff. He catches the glimpse of something moving in the heavy shadows there.

The sun came up almost suddenly Breaking onto the hushed world below, it strikes golden sparks off the river.

He looks back higher along the slope, he sees the hulk come out into the sunshine for a minute and DAVID sees it is the grizzly, the big male. In moments the bear is gone headed for the high country.

His glance strays towards the pickup where MARK bends over the motor.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Pretty soon, father will be gone
 too!

Lifting his pole to the proper position he tightened the line, but there is nothing on it. He glanced back over to the truck again.

MARK is looking over at the forest. He turns to motion to DAVID with a long sweep of his arm.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 That means hurry! Leave the rod.

He hops off the rock, stashes the rod in a bush, rushes up the bank and takes off running across the meadow.

131 EXT/INT. PICKUP - MORNING

131

By the time he reaches the pickup MARK has the door open.

MARK
 She's up there. No close call this
 time, but it's best to be on the
 safe side.

DAVID
 I saw her and the cubs as I was
 running in, she came out of the
 woods a good way up the valley.
 They're headed for the stream away
 from us.

MARK
 Could be this place has gotten too
 crowded for her.

DAVID
 You were right about the other one.
 I saw it way up on the side of the
 cliff over there.

From their view point they could see the mother bear step down to the river's edge and walk in.

MARK pulls a small pair of binoculars from the glove box. He takes a look then hands them to DAVID.

MARK

Here.

DAVID

How will the cubs get across?

MARK

Most animals can swim as soon as they can walk. It comes to them naturally.

INSERT - RIVER CROSSING

BEAR CUB 1 (POV) - The first cub plunges into the water, paddling out into the current. Ridding the ripples like a furry cork.

BEAR CUB 2 (POV) - Fretting along the shore, BEAR CUB 1 makes it to the other side where the mother bear seems to be calling for BEAR CUB 2.

BACK TO SCENE

DAVID looks through the binoculars watching and adjusting the glasses.

DAVID

The second cub doesn't want to cross the river.

MARK

Not all cubs are ready to swim, but they do have to learn someday.

INSERT - RIVER CROSSING

DAVID'S (POV) Sees through a binocular cut out.

DAVID

She's going back for the cub.

The mother bear goes back across the river. The cub scrambles up on to her, clinging to the silvery fur as she strikes out across the river.

DAVID (CONT'D)

They made it!

MARK

A fine instinct. A dog-gone fine mother.

INSERT THE BEARS AT RIVER & DEPARTURE

On the opposite bank she shakes, spraying water like a dog, while the cub ran to catch up with the other. Then the three of them move across the open meadow into the trees on the far side of the valley.

BACK TO SCENE

MARK (CONT'D)

Now I won't worry about you so much.

MARKS face is drawn again as he starts to open the door.

DAVID

I'm not getting any bites. What should I do?

MARK

Put on a spinner, maybe.

DAVID

I'd rather try flies, if you show me how.

MARK

(puzzled)

It would take more than one lesson.

DAVID

I saw bugs out there hopping around on the water.

MARK

Go ahead, try anything you want to. Nobody should tell somebody else what to fish with... Take the fly rod.

DAVID

I lost the spinners! Yesterday.

MARK

Oh.

DAVID

I don't know what happened to them,
they just disappeared.

MARK

Disappeared, you say?

DAVID

You wanted to teach me the flies
when we first came here.

MARK

That was a long way back. There's
no time now. But if you want to
fool around with it, take my hat.
Tie the flies on just like any
other hook.

DAVID pushes open the door and rushes around to the back of
the pick up to find the gear.

MARK climbs out his door, careful of the damaged foot. He has
made a crude brace of sticks to take some of weight when he
has to step on it.

132

EXT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - DAY

132

He moves around to the front of the truck.

DAVID returns with the hat and the fly rod. MARK Balancing on
his good leg, takes the hat from his son's hand.

MARK

I put a good selection of flies in
the band. If one doesn't work, try
another. Can't teach you all the
tricks but you can give it a try.

He put the hat on DAVID'S head, almost covering the boy's
eyes, and takes the rod a moment.

MARK (CONT'D)

It's an easy, soft kind of motion,
back and forth. Between two and ten
o'clock. You know where high noon
is, right?

DAVID

Yes, sir.

MARK shows the motion of the rod as he speaks. With a stiff
wrist he moves the rod back and forth, then breaking forward
with his arm as if casting. Then returns the rod to DAVID.

MARK

Keep your fly moving on the surface of the water. Try not to cast in the same place twice. Walk downstream as you fish, but don't go too far. When you reach that clump of willows come back and work that stretch over again.

MARK feels some wetness around his ankle again. Looking down there is fresh blood coming through the old brown stains.

DAVID

Maybe I ought to stay and help you?

MARK

I'm all right. I may have a touch of fever, but it won't knock me out again, if that's what you're afraid of.

DAVID

I'm not afraid.

DAVID turns and starts to walk off.

MARK

(flustered)
Wait...

DAVID stops and turns back.

MARK (CONT'D)

(apology tone)
I may need you later. Meanwhile, about casting. Let the rod do the work. Remember there's a rhythm to it.

He picks up a screwdriver and he makes a smooth forward-and-backwards stroke.

MARK (CONT'D)

A nice easy...

MARK sighs and tosses the tool aside.

MARK (CONT'D)

One more thing. The best place to set your fly down is on the opposite side of the current. Sometimes you can't reach it unless you wade out.

DAVID

I wouldn't go in without rubber waders like yours anyway. I think is still a bit cold.

MARK

You'll have to wade a stream sooner of later if you ever want to be a fly fisherman. Witch is up to you. Someday you'll decide. For right now...

MARK look off upstream, where the bears had disappeared.

MARK (CONT'D)

I want you to stay on dry ground. Fish or no fish, don't set a foot in the water.

JUMP CUT TO:

133 EXT. RIVER - BIG ROCK - DAY

133

MARK'S hat is a little big, and DAVID keeps fiddling with it.

Its a good hat, but he had to push it back on his head and it almost fit. There must be fifteen flies in the hat band. He stands near the big rock staring at the water talking to himself.

DAVID

MARK doesn't really think I will catch a fish. But I've seen a few shows on television, I know more than he thinks.

He strips out the line, letting the fly and line float downstream. He whips it back and it flies out of the water, back over his head, the big rock, and gets caught in a tree.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Great start. What a goof!

He ties on the first fly from the hat. With this second fly he moves away from the big rock, but he cracks that one off like a whip when he brings his arm to fast forward.

He ties on another.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It'll be easier this time. He wouldn't begin to teach me the real tricks of it!

He stands, checks his surroundings, and repeats the process. It lands in the water this time. But not where he wants it. He tries again, and snags it on a bush on the far side of the creek and loses that fly too.

He ties on another.

DAVID (CONT'D)
So much harder than I thought. But
I'll be danged if I give up.

This time he strips out the line without casting. The pole is almost nine feet long and he leans out holding the rod out as far as he can.

The line follows the current in the center of the river. But when the line tightens the fly is drug under, no longer on the surface. It continues to drag to the side and is caught up in some twigs. When he tries to pull it free, the line breaks!

He ties on another. Clearly frustrated.

DAVID (CONT'D)
MARK, told me nothing! And acting
so odd about not going in the
water. It's plain he's written me
off as a weakling. A mama's kid,
just like the little bear cub that
couldn't swim the river.

DAVID edges out as far as he can with open area behind him. He lets out the line in the current when out about fifteen feet, he pulls it back off to the side not right into his face. To his amazement it sweeps back over his head, but before it extends out behind he brings the rod back forward. No crack!

DAVID (CONT'D)
Oh, gosh I think I got it!

He repeats the process, and as it comes forward again he points the rod where he wants the fly to go, pointing down at the bubbling creek. But the fly slaps the water and soon sinks.

DAVID keeps working through the technique as he goes. Finally he learns to let the line come forward keeping the rod level to the water. By now he has tried most of flies on the hat.

DAVID (CONT'D)
No, luck! If the fool trout don't
like crawlers or these flies, then
what do they want?

He has reached the clump of willows where he was supposed to turn back. As he stands there, cudgeling his brain for some clue, he hears a small splash far beneath the overhanging willow branches.

DAVID (CONT'D)
That is a fish and he's eating something.

He gives the willow a closer look, and crawling up one of the shoots is a bug. He makes a grab at it, missed, it flew. As it rises in the sunlight he is struck by the color.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Pink, with a fuzzy brown around it.

He found another one. Seizing it, he holds it clinched in one hand as he starts for the pickup.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Better not waste time, a cloud at the end of the valley, looks like rain.

134 EXT/INT. PICK-UP - FRONT - OPEN HOOD - SEAT - DAY 134

MARK is aware of the weather too. He glances up that way, seeing the thunderhead bulge against the sky. He tackles his work harder than ever. He doesn't even pause when as DAVID comes up.

DAVID
I'm not having any luck, Sir. But I think I got the hang of casting a fly out.

MARK mumbles something like a swear word down in the engine.

MARK
#\$%#!

DAVID
I am wondering, there's a place I could go out in the stream just a little way...

MARK explodes down there in the depth of the engine.

MARK
No!

Hot and flushed, with a blond stubble of a beard on his cheeks, he looks upset as he glares at the tangle of wires.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Since you are here, you might help
 me. Get in the front seat and turn
 the key when I tell you.

DAVID puts the dead bug in his pocket. And steps up into the
 drivers seat.

MARK (CONT'D)
 All right...now.

But when DAVID switched the key, nothing happens.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Again.

Nothing happens again.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Son of chunk of scrap metal!

DAVID sits, stuck and stumped, watching the thunderhead build
 higher and higher into the sky. He waits for a command.

DAVID
 I hope it isn't stormy down in the
 city. Mother doesn't like
 lightning. Girl's never do.

Sitting there it hits him like a ton of bricks. He remembers
 how his mother always talked about MARK.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Never a bad word. Always looking
 forward to when my father comes
 home! (whispering) is...dad...home
 to stay?

He looks to see if he can see his father, there is the
 slightest space between the open hood. All he can see is his
 father's back, head down into the engine.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Mother, you should have seen how
 she look, all excited, Friday when
 we were waiting for you. I think
 she wanted you to come.

Something began to hum inside him. He wiggles on the bench
 seat, like a current of purpose ran through him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(whispering) I've got to do
something! Not just wish any more,
but to do something about it all!

Climbing down out of the pickup, he goes to stand beside his
father. MARK holds up a wire.

MARK
See that? It goes to the solenoid.
It should be the connection to the
starter. But it doesn't work.

DAVID stand there and nods like he understands.

MARK (CONT'D)
(scowling)
Hand me the tape, will you.

DAVID
Mother has to do a lot of hard
things at home, too. Last week we
had a thunderstorm and the lights
went out. She had to change the
fuse in the dark, it was kind of
scary.

MARK
(tormented)
DAVID will you please try the
ignition again?

Reaching into the front seat, DAVID turns the key. No luck.

DAVID
We never did know why the fuse blew
out, either.

MARK
Probably turned on too many lights
at the same time. She used to that
when a storm hit... Don't worry.
That thunderhead up there is local,
Weather's probably all right back
in town.

DAVID
It isn't only lightning; its a lot
of things. I mean, she's a girl and
they get scared. She tries not to
let on.

MARK looks up as if that surprised him.

MARK

She must have changed. (muttering to himself) But then who hasn't, all these years.

DAVID

She talks a lot when she's nervous. Only now there isn't anybody at home for her to talk to.

MARK

And if we don't get this truck in shape soon, there won't be anybody there by seven tonight. Which is when I promised to have you back. Will you try the switch again?

DAVID Reaches into the front seat, again turns the key. Nothing. When the motor didn't turn over again. Mark curses under his breath.

MARK (CONT'D)

(unintelligible cursing)
Son-of-a...

DAVID leans on the seat, shuttering at the thought of being late, and what would happen.

DAVID

(whispering to himself)
So that's why MARK is working so furiously. There is going to be a terrible fight when they get home.

DAVID moves back next to his father's elbow.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Don't be sore at her if shes nervous when we get there, huh?

MARK pops his head out of the engine and looks at DAVID impatiently.

MARK

Sore? She's got every right in the world to be worried sick if I don't bring you home on time. Do you think I'd do that to her then get sore?

DAVID

Well...her...um...I...

MARK

(calmer)

DAVID, go fishing, will you? I don't need you here anymore.

135 EXT/INT. PICK-UP - OPEN TAILGATE - DAY 135

DAVID fades back toward the rear of the truck. He stops and stares off at the looming tower of darkening cloud.

DAVID

This whole trouble is both my parents keep thinking I am too young. For everything.

He hastily drags the fishing box out and yanks it open.

From a fly-box he picks out a pink-and-brown fly, and an identical one just in case.

DAVID (CONT'D)

They don't even know how much older I am.

DAVID jerks the hat down over his eyes and starts for the river.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And there isn't much time left to prove it.

DISSOLVE TO:

136 EXT. RIVER - BIG ROCK - NEAR WILLOWS - DAY 136

DAVID is snagged in the willow brush along his side of the river. Every time he tried, his hook got caught on the branches, and he has to go untangle it. After a few attempts he was sure he has scared any fish away. The sun still shines on this part of the river by the big rock and willows.

DAVID

Maybe to those willows across the stream. If I can just get my fly over there a little above them, the current will carry it down under those branches.

So he lets the line out, whipped it back over his head then back forward, but he was short, and the current swept the fly away out beyond the willows.

DAVID (CONT'D)
So here it is. I want to cast my
fly clear across the river, but I'd
have to wade out ten feet or more.

He moved back up stream towards the big rock studying the
water. Suddenly he made up his mind.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I survived that mother grizzly. I
can catch a darn fish. Even if it
includes wading in the water.

He hears his father's voice plain as day.

MARK (V.O.)
You'll have to wade a stream sooner
or later if you ever want to be a
fly fisherman. Which is up to you.
Someday you'll decide. For right
now...

DAVID walks to the edge of the water, looking into it's
mesmerizing movement. He eyes the stream angrily.

DAVID
For right now stay out of the
water... Well sooner is right now!
Only a little time and everything
is at stake! (pause) No pressure.

DAVID musters all his courage, and through force of will he
steps out into the water. Just enough to cover his shoes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It really isn't dangerous. Right
here, for instance, there is a
clean slopping bottom.

He takes another step out. He continues to talk to himself,
keeping his courage up.

DAVID (CONT'D)
The water isn't more than a foot
deep. I can see every pebble.

Another step.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It even looks inviting with the
late afternoon sun beating down so
hot...

But just as he said it, the thunderhead has moved in shadowing the river. It is coming on fast. Glossy as a mirror, the river just gave back the overcast of the sky.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Dang! I wish the sun would come back for just a moment. So I could see the bottom better.

Even as he hesitates, there is a swirl out in the current. His heart quickens seeing a flash of white. And another over the far bank. He glimpses the whole curve of a rippling shape. Fish rising everywhere! He takes another step out.

DAVID casts his line as far as he could, but the fly still fell short of the swift water.

He holds his breath, and eases down into the shallows. The ice cold shock of it went through the blue jeans, half-way to his knees.

He takes two more steps out from the bank and gravel shifts slightly under his sneakers. His heart leaps and for a few seconds he stands still, half tuning his upper body ready to retreat. He took a few deep breaths letting his heart catch up.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Not today, no turning back! I can do this.

From a squirrels view high in a tree, by the river, DAVID is small in the river. But somehow it seems he belongs there. Standing out in the middle of the water.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I feel like part of the river!

It is indeed all around him. From upstream it comes pouring down at him, flowing around his legs, bubbling, pulling at them, then sliding away between its banks.

He could see rocks downstream bigger than he'd reckoned. Huge boulders that split the current. And on beyond, a fast stretch where the water tumbles furiously.

As DAVID stands frozen faltering with memory tearing and tugging at him. He hears his mother's voice cry out.

JEANNE (V.O.)
To young, he's too young!

He shrinks back.

DAVID

I can't give up! What would I have
to show for it if I gave up now?

He argues with himself. Fighting the urge to run out of the water.

DAVID (CONT'D)

In a few hours MARK will be gone,
there'd never be another time to
prove anything.

He turns facing the other bank. Pushing down the echo of fear he yells at himself.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Go on!

DAVID inched out into the stream. Planted his feet. Concentrating with new found strength he draws back his rod trying to get the right feel.

DAVID (CONT'D)

There is a rhythm Mark had said.
Now back easy, line straightens out
in the air, flip forward and the
rod sends it on curving across the
water. That is the best cast I've
made yet!

Still short, though. Feeling his way, step by step, DAVID wades deeper. The current is a moving wall against his legs, and he has to lean against it.

But this time the fly is out there in the riffle, a pink dot riding the swift water down towards the willows. A fish makes a flurry at it, but DAVID doesn't feel the strike and a miss.

Intently he coaxed. With little jerks on the line he jiggled the fly as he'd seen MARK do. Finally has to draw it in to cast again.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Don't put it in the same place
twice, MARK said.

Keeping his line whipping in the air he edged downstream a foot, another foot, and set the fly down in a new eddy.

The water is turning dark. He risked a look at the sky, dirty as tarnished metal.

A tricky little wind suddenly came down the river, roughing the surface, scattering this way and that.

And right behind it came the rain. A long grey fringe trailing from the clouds, it sweeps the floor of the valley.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I can't stop now!

DAVID glances around him, the fish were going crazy. One fish jumps clear out of the water for no reason at all. There are splashes all over the river.

He cast again, and a white flash sent the air cracking down onto him, breath jams in his throat.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Holy smokes! The lightning must
have hit my hook!

The rod bucks so hard he has to hang on with two hands as thunder burst against the earth. When it rumbles off, the reel is making a high screech as the goes spinning out.

The line reached the end with a pull, and far downstream a fish shot up out of the water. Arching, flinging itself this way and that.

DAVID stares at its antics, and then, as the rod keeps pulling in his hands, it dawns on him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
The fish is mine! A big one, a
really big one!

In a frenzy he tries to think what to do. He pulls up, with his finger on the lever of the automatic reel but nothing happens. The fish is fighting to hard for the reel to begin to bring it in. The tip of the rod is bent to the breaking point, frantically he lowers it some so it will not snap.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Ok, okay, mister trout your yanking
and ripping around out there. I
know you want more line. But
there's no more to let out. Golly!
I never knew fish were so strong.

Carrying on like that, it is going to bust the thin leader where the fly is tied on. All DAVID can do is go with it, downstream. He has to go fairly fast, slipping on the rocky bottom, just barely keeping his footing.

The willows are right ahead. He didn't know how deep the water is under them, but it gurgle's deep.

The whole surface of the stream is pitted with rain now. It is falling hard, stinging cold. Worst of all, it chews up the water so that you can't see an inch into it!

Then when DAVID is nearly up to his waist, the fish let up its wild thrashing and lays still. Heavy as a chunk of iron out there on the end of his line, but it seem to be tiring.

Engaging the trigger on the reel, with his left hand he tries to pull it in, and slowly it came. Grudgingly, kicking a little, the fish let itself be hauled closer and closer, as DAVID carefully fed the line back onto his reel a few inches at a time.

When ever the trout struggled, DAVID waited. It is only thirty feet from him, then twenty. In the seething water where it flounders he catches a glimpse of a blunt head with an underslung jaw. A big...

As he reaches out to draw it towards him once more, a fury breaks loose. The trout hurls high out of the water, skittering on its tail an instant, then plunges and darts for the far bank. The line screaming off the reel again, burning his hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)

That son of a gun! Next time I'll
have a net!

When the fish hit the end, it charges upstream, breaks out of the water once more, then comes back down so fast he doesn't know where it is until the rod is nearly ripped from his grip. The fish is below the willow's again pulling hard.

DAVID still out in the current nearly up to his waist, he takes another step downstream, the water tugging him along. Abruptly the gravel is slipping, slipping, washing from under his feet.

He losses his footing and a torrent sweeps over his head. DAVID is flung along, tumbled, and swirled about. Blindly he fights out, struggling to be free of the current. He gets his head up gasping for breath.

Staggering over to a rock, he clings there. The rod is still clenched in his hand, but when he tries his line it is slack.

He blinks the water out of his eyes. He is now across the river under the willows. He slumps against the bolder, breathing hard, the rain is pelting down around him. The lighting still splinters across the sky, and thunder sounds off in the distance across the wild high country.

DAVID lost his dad's hat, but spies it near the far bank, a little ways downstream. After a few moments wades back across the river, and retrieve's the hat. The hat and himself is sopped, as heavy as a wet wash. With chilled fingers he reels the line back in and hooks the pink fly to the handle of the rod.

With a heavy heart he starts back, as The rain is letting up, dwindled to a sprinkle. He turns to cut across the field toward the truck. After a few steps, something gets through the haze of his defeat. The pickup is facing homeward. And the front seat empty.

He glances around, over by the river on the big rock, MARK sits watching him. DAVID walks over, shoes squelching at every step. He mumbles to himself.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Mark saw the whole thing! Oh, boy.

On the big rock, MARK eyes his son, one ragged brow cocked higher than the other. Amazed at the spectacle played out before him. He is soaked from head to toe but his injured leg is wrapped in a windbreaker. Water stands out on his bristling pale hair, and his shirt is plastered to his muscular shoulders. Now he sits waiting.

DAVID walks straight up to his father, close enough to be reached. He meets the steady look of those burnt blue eyes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I waded out into the water. I had to.

MARK
(nodding)
Hum-hum.

DAVID
I didn't know when you'd get the truck fixed.

MARK
It was the fuses, they'd blown out. Something you said when you left to come down here, got me to thinking. After I changed those, everything works.

DAVID
Well I didn't know. And we needed food.

MARK

You don't have to explain to me.

DAVID

Well, you told me not to do it. And I'm sorry. But...

MARK

...you had to. Under certain rare circumstances that's enough reason.

DAVID falls silent. MARK is not angry, he just keeps looking at his son strangely.

DAVID

I fell in! I got all wet. And I lost a fish.

MARK

I know.

MARK looks downstream and for an instant fear shadows his face as if seeing it all over again. But when he looks back at DAVID there is a spark of pride in his eyes.

MARK (CONT'D)

That was a good one you had on.

DAVID

It doesn't do any good if you lose it.

DAVID holds out the soggy hat.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I guess that'd ruined.

MARK takes it from him.

MARK

It's been this wet before
(chuckling) I've missed many a fish
myself. What fly were you using?

DAVID holds out the rod to show the small artificial fly hooked to the rod.

DAVID

A pink one. I got it out of your
box. I had a silly idea, because I
found this bug.

DAVID digs it out of his pocket, fairly squished, and puts it into his father's palm.

MARK

I'll be darned. I never saw a salmon fly up here this early in the year.

DAVID

It was on those willows. I heard a fish snap at it, but I couldn't cast under there. I don't know how. I just messed it up every time.

MARK reaches down and picks up his own rod which has been lying in the grass beside the rock.

MARK

That's a tough one.

MARK takes a few steps from the rock. Shaking loose the line, he begins to let it out, flicking the rod back and forth until he has a good length stroking through the air over his head.

MARK (CONT'D)

First get your distance.

He sends the line reaching out toward the bush that overhangs the stream below. His hook almost touched it and comes whipping back, and out again.

MARK (CONT'D)

Then let it drop.

He set the fly down lightly in the water as if it had just fluttered down off the bush.

MARK (CONT'D)

That takes practice, plenty of practice. Better at first to work the fast water, just as you did.

DAVID

I wasn't working anything. I was standing all out of breath from the lightning and the fish got on my line. I didn't even know it was there at first.

MARK

If that's how it happened, you did some quick thinking to handle him as well as you did. Where did you get the idea to go downstream with him?

DAVID

Well he was going to break the line if I didn't!

MARK

Right. But most people haul back on their first fish and try to drag him in by main strength. You played with him.

DAVID

He was the one playing! He ran all around me. I didn't even know where he was.

MARK

For not knowing you sure kept a tight line. What are you trying to so, sell me the idea you can't fish? (pointing at DAVID) You're going to be a crackerjack fisherman. Don't kid me!

They eye each other for an instant. MARK'S eye quirks, then breaks into a grin, the one-sided hungry grin that haunted DAVID'S dreams.

DAVID'S shyness' grips him and he half-smiles back. He is not haunted by it now, and wonders why he ever ran from it.

DAVID

(stiffly)

I wouldn't mind it getting away so much if we didn't need it.

MARK

I know. When you feel as if you are on trial, you want to be at your best.

Again, he sends the line reaching out toward the bush that overhangs the stream below. His hook almost touched it and comes whipping back, and out again. He set the fly down lightly in the water.

MARK (CONT'D)

And your best can get all crossed up like a bunch of hot wires. One chance and only a little time to use it. (he strips out line) You think if you are worth anything you should be able to pull a miracle out of a hat when you need one.

MARK reels the line back in, shaking his head.

MARK (CONT'D)
Doesn't work that way, does it?

DAVID
Did you lose a fish too?

MARK hooks the fly to the rod.

MARK
A fish? No-that's one of the few
things I seem to know something
about.

He reaches down, and picks up the end of a string. Out of the shadows he pulls a cluster of medium-sized trout, all cleaned ready for the pan.

MARK (CONT'D)
You aren't hungry, are you? Come
on, let's go build a fire.

They make their way toward the pickup, MARK'S arm clamped hard around DAVID'S shoulders, they'd never been this close before.

DAVID has lots to say but as he looks up at his father, no words came. But in his mind his thoughts are racing.

DAVID (V.O.)
I can't believe that MARK said what
I was thinking. Not about the
fishing but the feeling we both
have inside, deep down. Does MARK
have the same wish too? That they
could patch up the pieces of this
weekend somehow? That he just had
to do something before it is too
late. It must have been to make him
come over to the river on the
injured leg. MARK needs those fish
he'd caught more than me. To give
us more time together. This means
the last hope is not finished
between us... Now if I could say
just the right thing.

The sun is beginning to break through the clouds.

DAVID

In a minute we will be sitting down across from each other, eating those trout. It is the chance I have pictured all along. If nothing goes wrong.

137 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - PICK-UP TAILGATE DOWN - DAY

137

As they reached the truck MARK has a funny look on his face. He reaches into his shirt pocket. Pulls out a damp pack of cigarettes and some wet matches. Tossing them aside, he begins to search through the junk on the floor of the pickup.

MARK

They were right here!

He had left the tailgate down, right inside is the tackle box and some scattered tools. MARK is staring in open dismay.

MARK (CONT'D)

Who'd ever think!

DAVID watches his dad continue to search.

DAVID(V.O.)

This is bad, whatever it is. I can't see anything to make MARK groan like this. Have I done something again?

MARK

Sometimes... I just can't believe this!

DAVID

What's wrong?

MARK

I left it right here! I put the smokes in my pocket and took out those few matches.

DAVID

Is it the matchbox you are hunting for?

MARK

Yes, it was a metal cylinder the waterproof kind.

DAVID hops in the truck searching too. If they have lost that...

MARK (CONT'D)
 Never mind. It's gone. And I know
 who took it.

He picks up something up and hands it to DAVID. A small round
 stone.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Were sunk DAVID, it is time to go
 on back to town.

DAVID
 Not if I can help.

DAVID pulls out his old jacket from the truck and reaches
 into a pocket producing matches. Like it was nothing at all.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Here I got some!

138 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - DAY 138

The fire hisses and cracks. It is smoking just enough to
 smell good. MARK keeps looking at DAVID as if he had produced
 those matches by black magic. Mark is suspicious.

MARK
 Do you always carry matches?

DAVID
 No, sir. Just on fishing trips.

MARK
 David, you're something from me.

DAVID
 Well, I was going to tell you.
 That's exactly the same way I lost
 your spinners. I left them there on
 the tailgate for a few minutes and
 when I got back, there were two
 stones.

MARK
 Packrat, I'm thinkin.'

DAVID
 Do you reckon the packrat could
 have taken my can of ham too?

DAVID leans forward to turn the fish, glad to have changed
 the subject. He remembers how frightened he was when he had
 hidden the matches away for some dark emergency.

MARK

(nodding)

If there was a stone left in its place, he's the culprit. A camp robber or a magpie will steal your bright stuff too. But nothing but a packrat leaves a pebble behind.

DAVID

You recon the stones were his way of paying for things?

MARK

Who knows? Maybe he thought you wouldn't miss what he took. I've never figured it out, but those little thieves have robbed me before. I should have known better than to leave that matchbox out.

DAVID see that MARK is beginning to look disgusted with himself again.

DAVID

Can't you just see that darn-fool animal down in his hole surrounded by two spinners, a can of ham, and a box of matches. Beside all the other stuff he has stolen, and he can't use any of it!

MARK smiled that crooked grin.

DAVID (CONT'D)

If it wasn't for your fish, we wouldn't have needed any matches.

MARK

You'll get that big bruiser of yours, someday. You'll come back up here and go to the same spot and stalk him. I've done it myself, even years later.

MARK smiles a big grin.

MARK (CONT'D)

You will never quite get over a big fish that fights free.

DAVID

What do you do if he keeps taking you down the river and there's a big hole like that? You can't go on and you can't pull him in?

MARK

If it was me I'd get below the willows before I cast, then put the fly upstream as far as possible.

MARK reaches out and checks the cooking fish.

MARK (CONT'D)

You should plan where to land a fish before you hook one. I could show you... Well, you'll find it all out by experience. I did.

DAVID

It's kind of lonesome, though, to be up here all by yourself.

MARK

I think those fish are done.

They eat the fish right out of the pan. Sitting knee to knee, they dig into the meal silently. Both relishing the taste.

DAVID

Good. (through a mouth full of food) This is really good!

MARK watches his son, not eating much himself.

MARK

At least it makes up for the rough time we've had.

DAVID

It's been a good time, all of it.

MARK

Your mother wouldn't think so.

DAVID

(pausing to think, eats more fish)
Well she'll be a little scared about the bears, but...

MARK

No need for her to know about that. When we get home, I'll drop you off. You won't have to go into the whole story. It would just frighten her.

DAVID

If she understands everything it won't.

MARK shows DAVID how to pull the head and bones including the tail of the fish away, to get to the meat underneath.

MARK

You may want to come up here again someday, when you're older. Better skip the gory details.

DAVID

She'll let us come up, because I'm older now. I'm going to tell her about that.

MARK

You are, but that doesn't cut much with a grizzly. That's what she will be afraid of.

DAVID

We'll explain. We'll tell her it's kind of dangerous, but anyhow we have to come back. You know, we just have to.

MARK

(looking at his bandages)
I know it's true. You will have to when the time comes. (looking off to the cliff) Right now I can sympathize with her more than I ever did before. Watching you fall into that river took ten years off my life!

DAVID

(surprised)
I had forgotten my fear of water! Somehow it washed away when I'd gone under. Well, I came up again all right. Kept the rod in my grip too!

MARK
 (nodding)
 But did you know that a bolt of
 lightning had struck the stream it
 could electrocute you on the spot?

DAVID
 (considering that)
 No, sir. I still have lots to
 learn.

MARK
 Suppose the water had swept you on
 the rocks and you'd hit your head?
 I saw my brother go down...

MARK looks away into his own dark past, picking at scraps in
 the pan.

They both grow silent remembering scenes from the past.

JUMP CUT TO:

INSERT

139 EXT. PARK WITH LAKE - SWIMING AREA - DAY 139

DAVID can hear his father's voice, angrily shouting at his
 mother. Standing knee deep in water.

MARK
 My brother drowned because he
 couldn't swim. This boy is going to
 learn!

A younger MARK seizes young, six year old, DAVID and swings
 him out over the dark water. The boy hits the water with a
 big splash.

DAVID hears his mother's scream. Engulfed by the dark water.

JUMP CUT TO:

RETURN TO SCENE

140 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - CAMP SIDE OF PICK-UP - FIRE PIT - DAY 140

DAVID looks at his father, sitting there side-by side.

DAVID
I was afraid of you... But sitting
here now none of my fear is back.

MARK frowns, through a sideways grin.

MARK
Sorry, that was all my fault. I...

DAVID
We'd better tell her.

MARK
What?

DAVID
Something else we have to tell her.
This is the first time I even used
my swimming, and it's different
from the YMCA pool.

MARK
You're doggone right it is!

DAVID
But it's still O.K. That's what we
have to tell her.

MARK sits back wearily, rubbing his eyes.

MARK
Your mother and I had quite a
difference over that question once.
We didn't see eye-to-eye on just
how to raise you. Maybe, when the
opportunity came up to go work
overseas I felt it was a good idea
to go, and for her to raise you as
she saw fit. Sorry David. That was
probably not the best idea. A child
should have both parents around,
and work together to develop what
is best for their child.

DAVID
Yeah, that was a long time ago.
Things are different now. Let's go
home, Mark.

DISSOLVE TO:

141 EXT/INT. PICK-UP - FOREST TRACK ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON 141

As before the forest road is an old track with the wheels riding in two tracks where grass and plants grow in the middle of it. They travel between tall pines on either side.

MARK'S knuckles stand out boney, he is holding the wheel so tightly. He can work the clutch with his hurt left foot, but he has to take it easy, as pain shoot through it with each push of the pedal. After some time they bump onto the highway.

DAVID

How long to reckon it'll take to get to the city?

MARK

Three of four hours at this rate. Look in the glove compartment, will you? My watch is in there.

It is full of stuff. As DAVID rummages through it, a wallet fell out. As he picks it up, it opens in his hands and there is his mother.

She looks like a young girl, with her hair all loose around her cheeks and her eyes, shining. She is smiling, a beautiful look, at whoever snapped the picture.

MARK glances over, and when he sees it he seems disconcerted. He takes the wallet and shoves it in his pocket as if it was pretty private.

DAVID finds the watch.

DAVID

It's five-thirty.

MARK

Were not going to make it by seven. I guess I'd better call her.

142 INT/EXT ROADSIDE GAS STATION - PHONE BOOTH - MAGIC HOUR 142

Exiting the highway MARK pulls in, and ahead of him is a public payphone. He pull over to it.

DAVID

Let me talk to her.

MARK thinks it over, and gives DAVID some change.

MARK

If she hears your voice she'll be sure you are alright.

DAVID hops out and goes to the phone booth. He closes the door behind him, shutting out the nosey highway. The phone rings on the other end. It doesn't take long, in just a minute she answers.

JEANNE (O.S.)

(worried)

Hello.

DAVID

Hi!

JEANNE (O.S.)

(pleased and anxious)

Oh, Davey! Where are you?

DAVID

We're still up on the pass. Listen mother, it was great! We got chased by a bear and I fell in the river. It was a grizzly bear, too. She ate all our food. (silence on the other end) Mother?

JEANNE (O.S.)

(faintly)

Yes... Yes, I'm listening.

DAVID

Well MARK got kind of hurt. The bear clawed him. Have you got some bandages and things?

MARK sees DAVID is saying to much. By that time MARK has got himself out of the truck and hobbled to the booth.

MARK

What are you? (opening the door)
DAVID give me the phone!

DAVID

(finishing)

He's bleeding pretty bad. Here he is.

DAVID gets back into the pickup.

DAVID (CONT'D)

That ought to do it. MARK needs to come back to us, he's lonesome.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
 She's always gets soft all over
 when people were bleeding.

MARK
 No, no, it looks worse than it is.
 No, JEANNE, I'm alright... Well we
 did run into some trouble... But
 we've got a boy who can take it...

MARK notices DAVID listening from the truck and closes the
 phonebooth door. But DAVID could only hear what MARK was
 saying.

They talked a long time. MARK had to put more change into the
 phone.

DAVID let's his head tip back against the seat, and shuts his
 eyes thinking of the grizzly family.

DISSOLVE TO:

143 EXT. OPEN MEADOW - EVENING

143

Flanked by mountains on either side, we are back in a valley.
 For miles it spreads out all around, in a winter-brown
 grassland. Carving through it, a young river lay like a sheet
 of dark glass.

Moving through the open meadow the mother grizzly and her two
 cubs lope along. Once again having the valley all to
 themselves.

High above the valley, on the cliff, at the lone pine the
 massive male grizzly rises to his full height. He gazing over
 his domain and roars, like only a grizzly can do.

DISSOLVE TO:

RETURN TO SCENE

144 EXT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION - PHONE BOOTH - MAGIC HOUR

144

The sky in both scenes match as the grizzly dissolves into
 MARK returning from the phonebooth. When MARK gets to his
 seat he looks warm, but not unhappy. Although he is trying to
 act server.

MARK
 Now she will sit and imagine the
 worst for hours. You shouldn't have
 gone into all that over the phone.

DAVID
What did you tell her?

MARK
I tried to calm her down. It wasn't
easy. I may have to go in with you
after all, just to prove I'm not
dying.

DAVID smiles innocently.

DAVID
Yeah.

145 INT. PICKUP - HIGHWAY - NIGHT 145

DAVID sleeps on the bench seat next to MARK, he leans on his
jacket propped up on the door.

All the driving has made MARK'S foot worse and it is bleeding
again. A small puddle forms on the trucks floor.

146 LAKWOOD CITY HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM ENTRANCE - NIGHT 146

Instead of taking DAVID home, MARK feels he'd better go to
the hospital first. He feels the wetness on his foot.

His son is startled awake when driving into the hospital
instead of home. Staff comes out to greet them and take them
inside.

146 INT. LAKWOOD HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ADMITTING ROOM - NIGHT 146

MARK
Call your mother tell her where you
are. I don't...think...I...

MARK turns white and is about to fall over, but is caught by
two of the hospital's staff.

DAVID
Dad!

DAVID leaps into action getting help to call his mother and
explains what has happened to his father.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Everything is in his wallet. My
 mother is waiting for us! It was a
 bear attack. A grizzly!

DISSOLVE TO:

147 INT. LAKWOOD HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

147

MARK is in the bed wearing a hospital gown with his foot bandaged up to the knee, and elevated with a pillow. He listens to a doctor in an old classic white overcoat. The sun shines between closed blinds, laying white thin stripes across the bed.

STAFF DOCTOR
 ...You got to us just in time. You
 lost a significant amount of blood.
 I've kept you on an I.V. due to
 your dehydrated state. I want...

Suddenly the door flings open and DAVID rushes in followed by his mother. DAVID runs to MARK'S side.

DAVID
 We came as soon as we could!

JEANNE steps up behind DAVID putting her hands on her son's shoulders. She looks at the leg then up to the grinning face of MARK.

STAFF DOCTOR
 Are you family?

JEANNE
 Oh, dear! Yes, he is my husband and
 this is DAVID our son. (looking at
 MARK) Is he okay?

MARK reaches out and grabs her hand softly.

MARK
 Yes, I'll live... Sorry I couldn't
 get DAVID home last night.

STAFF DOCTOR
 I was just telling your husband he
 will have to stay off his feet for
 a couple of weeks. Take him home
 and make sure he rests.

MARK looks from the doctor to JEANNE.

MARK

It would only be for a couple of weeks, and then...

JEANNE

No! You can't come home for a couple of weeks.

Everyone exchanges glances. Lastly she smiles at DAVID.

JEANNE (CONT'D)

But, you can come home to stay!

JEANNE slips by her son engulfing MARK in a hug, and a tender kiss. DAVID breaks the long moment by getting on the bed throwing his arm around his father's shoulders and his other around his mother's waist. He beams, they are a family again.

And then, they all start chattering at once. MARK is sorry, JEANNE is worried but delighted, and DAVID is excited. The doctor quietly slips out the door.

148

INT. LAKWOOD HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

148

The doctor exits the room out into the hallway and runs into a nurse.

NURSE

How is our Mr. Grizzly?

STAFF DOCTOR

Oh, him. I think they're ALL going to be just fine.

The End.