

# THE REAL DIARY OF A REAL BOY

by  
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based on the memoir by  
Henry Augustus Shute

(PUBLIC DOMAIN)

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FADE IN ON:

The SCOWLING FACE of an 11-year-old boy.

Brow knotted, jaw locked. Eyes straight ahead.

This is HENRY and he is clearly unhappy about something.

HENRY (V.O.)

Father said I had to keep a diary.

Henry glances up as the torso of a man in a suit-coat and vest crosses in front of him.

This is FATHER (aka GEORGE SHUTE).

Henry sits in a hard, straight-backed wooden chair in the parlor of a modest, 1860's-era New England home. His feet dangle from the chair, not quite touching the floor.

With measured paces, Father circles Henry, earnestly lecturing him. We don't hear what he says but Henry fills us in.

HENRY (V.O.)

I told him I didn't want to. But he said I had to. He said he would give a thousand dollars if he had kept a diary when he was a boy.

Father chuckles at a fond boyhood memory - and then quickly puts his "father face" back on, gives his final word on the matter and walks away.

Henry sags in the chair.

HENRY (V.O.)

But he didn't. So now I have to.

EXT. EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE - DAY

A distant church bell rings out over a beautiful spring day.

Green pastures and country lanes.

Tree-lined neighborhoods with dirt streets, clapboard houses and picket fences.

Men, women, boys and girls all dressed in their Sunday best step out of their houses, wave to their neighbors and merge in the streets like tributaries into a river that flows toward the ringing bell.

EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

IN THE TOWER

The CHURCH BELL swings, ringing loudly, as the faithful gather below.

ON THE LAWN

AUNT SARAH, a 40-something spinster wearing a huge bonnet, marches toward the church with Henry firmly in hand.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Sunday, May 26th. Had to go to  
church today.

Following them, are Henry's sisters, KEENE and CELE (13 and 9), hair and dresses in perfect order. Behind them comes...

MOTHER, carrying baby-brother, FRANKIE. Gentle and fair, yet clearly in command, she glances back, keeping an eye on...

Father, sulking and bringing up the rear.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Father came too 'cause Mother made  
him.

ON THE CHURCH STEPS

MINISTER GILKEY, nearly as old as the Bible, greets the faithful filing into the church.

As the Shute's near the steps, Henry slips out of Aunt Sarah's grasp and, like a determined athlete testing his skill, hops on one foot up the steps and right past the Minister into the church.

Aunt Sarah tosses an embarrassed nod to the Minister and hustles after him.

AUNT SARAH  
Henry! Stop that.

Minister Gilkey glares after Henry disapprovingly, then turns back to find...

Father -- standing before him, looking every bit the caught, guilty boy of his youth.

MINISTER GILKEY  
Well. George Shute.

FATHER  
 (nods uncomfortably)  
 Minister Gilkey -- sir.

And he quickly moves on as the Minister's disapproving glare follows *him* into the church.

EXT. CHURCH - LATER

The congregation empties out and spreads onto the lawn, gathering in small groups to chat.

Father stands with a group of men under a tree, telling a lively story. JIM MELCHER stands next to him, patiently listening to the story for the 114th time...but still enjoying the telling.

Henry and his buddy, BEANY (aka Elbridge Watson), sit in the tree above the group, listening in.

FATHER  
 So I'm on the front porch ballin'  
 and carrying on, trying to stall  
 Old Ike, while Jimmy here...  
 (he puts a hand on Jim's  
 shoulder)  
 ...sneaks 'round back to get my  
 rooster. Well, deaf as he was, Old  
 Ike hears Jimmy messing with his  
 coop and takes off runnin' for the  
 backyard, with me right behind. And  
 we round the corner just in time to  
 see Jimmy stuff my rooster in a  
 sack.  
 (imitates Old Ike puffing  
 up angrily)  
 Well, Old Ike turns red as the  
 Devil and charges after Jimmy -- so  
 he takes off like a shot out the  
 back gate and down the alley.  
 (laughing and enjoying his  
 own story)  
 I swear he must of thought the  
 Devil himself was chasing him,  
 'cause he headed straight for the  
 church and ran right in -- looking  
 for sanctuary I suppose. Well, Ol'  
 Gilkey...  
 (he jerks a thumb toward  
 the church, indicating  
 the old minister)  
 ...was crouched down in the aisle  
 scraping gum from under the pews  
 when Jimmy comes running in...and  
 plows right over him without even  
 slowing down.

(MORE)

FATHER (cont'd)  
 (laughing and acting out  
 the grand collision)  
 Jimmy went bouncing one way and Ol'  
 Gilkey tumbled the other and before  
 you know it, my rooster was out and  
 running up and down the place, with  
 Gilkey and Jimmy trying to catch  
 him and Old Ike trying to catch  
 Jimmy.

The men laugh. Father shrugs.

FATHER  
 Seemed to me that they had things  
 pretty well in hand, so I just went  
 home.

More laughter. Jim smiles and shakes his head.

JIM  
 That's the truth, all right. I was  
 always the one getting caught and  
 you were always getting away.

FATHER  
 (grinning)  
 Just a gift, I suppose.

IN THE TREE

The boys smile. Then...

A VOICE FROM OFF-SCREEN...

MRS. LEWIS (O.S.)  
 (searching)  
 Mr. Shute? Mr. Shute?

Father freezes and peeks back over his shoulder.

MRS. LEWIS, a 50'ish, odd aunt sort with a flowery bonnet, is  
 searching the crowd and closing in.

Henry sees her and smiles crookedly.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 Mrs. Lewis come looking for Father  
 again today. She is always askin'  
 him to do chores for her on  
 account'a Mr. Lewis got a divorce.

Father casually steps behind the tree to hide.

The men standing next to him stifle their laughter as he  
 shooshes them -- but it's too late.

MRS. LEWIS  
Oh, Mr. Shute. There you are.

JIM  
(smiling)  
Looks like you won't be getting  
away this time.

Father shoots him a look...as Jim and the other men quickly  
say their good-byes and scamper off.

Mrs. Lewis arrives just as they are all dispersing like  
cockroaches from a light. They tip their hats and scurry  
past.

MRS. LEWIS  
Hello, gentlemen -- oh -- well --  
all right -- Goodbye then. Goodbye.

Mrs. Lewis turns to Father and extends her hand.

MRS. LEWIS  
Mr. Shute.

Father steps out from behind the tree and takes her hand.

FATHER  
Mrs. Lewis.

MRS. LEWIS  
I was just speaking with your dear  
wife and telling her about my  
chicken coop and about how those  
boards you fixed last week have all  
come loose again and how one has  
just plain fallen right off...

Father sighs.

MRS. LEWIS  
...And now my chickens are so  
scared that something is going to  
come in and get them that they have  
just stopped laying eggs...

Henry and Beany giggle quietly.

MRS. LEWIS  
...And, well, since Mr. Lewis  
departed, you know how I depend on  
my eggs. Sy Smith, pays me -- well,  
I won't say how much he pays me  
because that's a private business  
matter -- but he pays me for my  
eggs.

(MORE)

MRS. LEWIS (cont'd)

So I was hoping you could come to look at my coop. Now, I told your wife I didn't want to take you away from any chores she had for you...

Father sees Mother pass behind Mrs. Lewis and his eyes register a little flicker of hope.

But Mother only smiles and nods as she, Aunt Sarah and the rest of the family pass on.

Father's hopeful flicker dies.

MRS. LEWIS

...but she said she didn't have any chores for you this afternoon, or at least nothing that couldn't wait till later, and that she would be happy to have you come look at my coop...

Mrs. Lewis turns and walks away, fully expecting Father to fall in behind her...which he does.

MRS. LEWIS

...Now, I have some wood you can cut up to plug the holes with and some nails but you had better bring your own hammer. I believe Mr. Lewis took the hammer when he departed. And the nails might be rusty but...

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

The yard and house have a patina of neglect.

Father, grumpy and resentful, kneels behind the chicken coop with a couple of nails in his mouth and positions a board for nailing.

FATHER

Hand me that hammer.

Henry, slumped down on an old can of nails, picks up the hammer and hands it to Father.

HENRY (V.O.)

Father caught me laughin' and made me go with him to look at Mrs. Lewis' coop.

FATHER

Now hold that end up.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 Only we did a lot more than look at  
 it.

FATHER  
 Keep holdin' it now.

Henry holds the plank steady as Father hammers and curses  
 under his breath.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Henry, Beany and another boy, PEWT (aka Charles Purington)  
 are spread out along a narrow, woodland creek, intently  
 searching the ground.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 May 27th. Went toad huntin' with  
 Beany and Pewt today.

BEANY  
 Do you see any?

A long silence.

HENRY  
 Nope.

Another long silence.

PEWT  
 Me neither.

EXT. HENRY'S STREET - NIGHT

The GAS MAN stands in his wagon, lighting a street lamp as  
 Henry and Pewt pass. Beany sulks along behind them.

BEANY  
 I can't believe we couldn't find  
 even one dang toad.

PEWT  
 (shrugs)  
 Still too early, I guess.

The boys stop in front of Beany's house and he mopes into his  
 yard.

HENRY  
 See ya.



Beany nods.

PEWT

Yeah, I better get home before my Pa starts yellin' for me. See ya, tomorrow.

HENRY

See ya.

Pewt trots off and Henry crosses the street to his house.

As he approaches, he sees Father and Jim Melcher standing on the front porch, dimly lit by lamp light spilling out the open front door.

Henry crawls through a gap in the fence where a couple of pickets are missing and quietly moves toward the shadowy end of the porch, so not to interrupt them.

ON THE PORCH

Jim is friendly but annoyed.

JIM

You've been telling me that for a year now.

FATHER

I know, I know. It's just...well, you know how it is...one thing and another...and...

JIM

And more stalling. The time is now, George. Grant's won the nomination. And now it's up to us to see that he wins New Hampshire.

FATHER

(scoffs)

I don't think he's gonna have much of a fight. The whole damn state's Republican.

JIM

That may be. But we still gotta do our part. He didn't win the war alone, you know.

Father looks at the ground to hide a flush of shame. For what, we don't know yet.

FATHER

Yeah, I know. -- Just seems like a lotta work for something that's gonna happen anyway.

Jim shakes his head, exasperated.

JIM

George, you haven't changed since we were boys. Always trying to get out of everything. When are you gonna grow up?

FATHER

Whaddya mean? I...

Father sees Henry standing at the end of the porch and stops. Jim turns and smiles.

JIM

Well hey, Henry. How you doin' tonight?

HENRY

(shrugs)  
Good. Toads ain't out yet.

JIM

No? Well, you keep lookin'. Toads always turn up eventually.  
(he turns to Father)  
Don't they, George?

Father scowls. Jim chuckles.

JIM

I'll be lookin' for you Saturday night.  
(to Henry)  
Good night, Henry.

HENRY

G'night.

Father watches Jim walk away, then notices Henry looking up at him.

FATHER

(gruff)  
What?

HENRY

I didn't say nothin'.

FATHER

Yeah, well...

He stomps into the house, leaving Henry confused.

EXT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Warm light and LIVELY MUSIC spill out from the open doors and windows of the Town Hall.

A big party is going on inside and people are lined up to get in.

Many of the men are veterans, dressed in their Union Army uniforms.

Father, one of the few men not in uniform, wears a simple suit and tugs at his over-starched shirt collar as he and Henry cross the street toward the Town Hall. He looks nervous like he's about to go on a job interview.

Henry is so thrilled he's about to burst.

HENRY (V.O.)

I don't know why, but all of a sudden today Father decided to go to the big rally and he took me with him!

Father and Henry get in line behind a woman wearing a large hoop dress that completely blocks Henry's view. He hops and stands on his toes, trying to see inside.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Henry and Father get to the front of the line and Father hands his tickets to the DOORMAN, a uniformed Army veteran with one arm.

The man takes the tickets and drops them into a box.

Father looks at the missing arm...then up to the man's face.

Their eyes meet briefly. Father seems to want to say something but can only muster a whispered...

FATHER

Thanks.

But the man is already taking tickets from the next people in line and doesn't hear.

Henry, free at last, darts out from behind the woman in the big dress and gets his first look at the grand hall.

It's richly decorated with overflowing red, white and blue ribbons, flags and bunting.

A campaign banner for "GRANT & COLFAX" hangs over the stage and under that, A BRASS BAND is playing.

Couples crowd the dance floor.

Henry stands in awe, grinning and bug-eyed with excitement.

Father looks like he'd rather be anywhere else.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Jim Melcher, wearing his Captain's uniform, dances past, sees Father and waves.

JIM

George! I'll be right back!

Father nods without enthusiasm.

Jim dances another couple of turns, then gracefully steps out of the dance, bows to his dancing partner and strides back through the crowd toward them with a big smile.

JIM

George! Henry!

He shakes a scolding finger at Father.

JIM

I was starting to think you weren't going to come.

Father shrugs.

JIM

Well, now that you're here I've got some people I want you to meet.

He throws an arm around Father and starts to lead him away, then stops and calls back over his shoulder.

JIM

Henry, there's a plate of doughnuts over on that table that was asking for you earlier.

Henry beams excitedly and Father gives him a quick "mind-your-manners" look before Jim pulls him into the crowd.

Henry looks around the room, trying to decide where in this fun house to begin.

He settles on the food table and heads for it, weaving his way through the crowd at the edge of the dance floor.

## ON THE TABLE

The doughnuts are piled high and frosted with sugar.

Henry grabs one and shoves it, nearly whole, into his mouth, then grabs another.

TWO COUPLES step out of the dance and come to the table for punch and Henry gets bumped to one side but not without first grabbing two more doughnuts.

He stakes out a spot next to the wall, eats his doughnuts and scans the room for the next fun thing.

## ACROSS THE ROOM

Henry catches glimpses, between the dancers, of Father and Jim and we see the following:

Jim introduces Father to a large, bearded man, wearing a heavily decorated Union uniform.

This is GENERAL MARSTON. He's a whole head taller than Father and, as they shake hands, Father looks like a nervous schoolboy meeting the principal.

Jim stands between Father and General Marston with a hand on each man's shoulder. He's smiling and telling General Marston a funny story. The General listens without expression and occasionally glances at Father.

Jim delivers his punch line and laughs. General Marston doesn't laugh, and Father now looks even more uncomfortable.

General Marston gives a final nod to Jim, glances briefly at Father and walks away.

Father and Jim watch him leave.

Father doesn't seem happy about the interview but Jim dismisses his gloomy expression, waves at someone across the room and pulls Father in that direction until Henry can no longer see them.

## ON STAGE

The band finishes a tune and everyone applauds. Henry turns to the stage -- but he's too short.

At his height the crowd is all hoop skirts and coattails and he can't see a thing.

As the band starts up another tune, Henry weaves through the crowd toward the stage, stopping along the way to grab a couple more doughnuts.

He winds up against the wall close to the stage. Chairs line the wall but all of them are occupied.

As Henry approaches, a TEEN-AGE BOY steps out of the crowd and nervously approaches a TEEN-AGE GIRL seated against the wall.

The boy extends his hand to the girl and says something but it's too noisy to hear what. The girl shyly nods, takes his hand and they go to the dance floor.

Henry immediately steps up onto the empty chair, beating another young woman to it. She frowns at him and moves on.

Henry is now a head taller than the crowd around him.

The band plays. The crowd dances. And Henry loves it.

His attention zeros in on the

BAND LEADER.

Tall, handsome and confident, he swings his baton in precise, exuberant formations and then, while still conducting, begins to play a CORNET -- with one hand.

ONE HAND! Henry is in awe!

The dancers whirl. The band plays.

The music reaches a crescendo and with a sudden downward sweep of the Band Leader's baton, abruptly ends.

The crowd applauds.

Henry stuffs his doughnuts into his jacket pockets so he can applaud.

The Band Leader bows deeply and sweeps his arm toward the other musicians who also bow and set down their instruments. Their set is over.

Jim Melcher steps onto the stage, shakes the Band leader's hand, then turns to the crowd.

JIM

Ladies and gentlemen! Ladies and gentlemen!

Henry watches the band leader glide down from the stage, cradling his golden cornet.

He moves through the crowd, nodding and smiling. Men shake his hand and clap him on the back. Women blush.

Henry watches every move.

OFF-SCREEN Jim Melcher can be dimly heard introducing General Marston.

JIM (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen! Ladies and gentlemen! Please welcome our guest of honor. Exeter's own, General Alexander Marston!

Applause goes up. But Henry stays focused on the Band Leader until he disappears, enveloped by the adoring crowd. Applause carries us into...

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Henry lies in bed, staring at the ceiling with an exhilarated expression.

The sound of applause fades...and all is quiet but for Henry's breathing and the crickets outside his window.

He is beaming.

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Henry, Beany and Pewt wind their way down Main Street, dodging wagons and pedestrians, to GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP and press their faces against the window.

Inside, MR. GORHAM watches them with a suspicious eye.

HENRY

See! There it is!

A CORNET, glimmering gold, and etched with intricate, swirling designs rests on a velvet-swaddled pedestal in the window.

PEWT

Sure is shiny.

Henry's eyes slowly caress the cornet from end to end.

HENRY

Yeah. It's just like the one that band leader had.

Beany follows Henry's reverent gaze to the cornet but doesn't get the attraction. He then spots the \$25 price tag.

BEANY

Dang! That thing costs twenty-five dollars!

Henry is jolted from his reverie.

HENRY

So?

BEANY

So, you ain't got twenty-five dollars.

HENRY

I got some saved!

BEANY

You ain't got twenty-five dollars saved.

HENRY

Almost, I do!

Beany gives him a skeptical look.

HENRY

Well, it's none of your business anyhow. It ain't your cornet.

BEANY

Yeah, and it ain't yours neither.

Annoyed, Henry turns back to the cornet and tries to recapture the moment -- but it's gone.

His eyes reluctantly shift to the \$25 price tag.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - DAY

Henry sits on the bed with his treasure chest, a small salt box with a tacked on lid, open on his lap.

Inside we see coins, marbles, fish hooks, balls of fishing line, a dried-up sparrow wing, a pea shooter and other boy paraphernalia.

Henry counts coins.

HENRY

...19, 20, 21, 22.

He digs around in the box for more...but there are no more.

He looks thoughtfully at the money in his hand and sighs.



HENRY (V.O.)  
I got one dollar and twenty-two  
cents.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

OLD FRANCIS, the schoolmaster, ancient and grim, has a willow switch raised high above his head, about to administer a licking to SKINNY BRUCE.

OLD FRANCIS  
Master Bruce. Are you prepared to  
receive your punishment?

Skinny tightens up his face.

The switch flashes downward and we...

WHIP PAN TO

Henry. Not paying any attention to poor Skinny. He is absorbed in doodling a cornet in the margin of his workbook.

Off-screen the switch strikes and Skinny yelps.

HENRY (V.O.)  
June 3rd. Skinny got licked.

Henry admires his drawing.

EXT. HENRY'S PORCH - EVENING

Father sits on the steps, smoking a pipe and brooding. Henry comes onto the porch and sits down a few feet away.

Father nods to him and they sit in silence. Father puffs on his pipe while Henry quietly, steadily watches him.

Father glances at Henry...once...then again...then, finally unnerved by Henry's attention, breaks the silence.

FATHER  
So -- how was school today?

HENRY  
Good.

Father nods and smokes his pipe. Henry watches him.

FATHER  
Old Francis still handing out  
lickings?

HENRY

Near every day.

Father smiles...then turns fatherly.

FATHER

You haven't been getting any  
lickings, have you?

HENRY

No, sir.

Father nods...and seems slightly disappointed.

FATHER

Well, that's good. That's good.  
Your Mother and Aunt Sarah'll be  
happy to hear that.

He smokes a bit, then casually looks over his shoulder into  
the house and lowers his voice.

FATHER

So, uh, been any good fights  
lately?

HENRY

Well, Tady Finton and Pozzy  
Chadwick got to stumpin' each other  
for a fight last week.

FATHER

Yeah?

HENRY

Yeah. -- But Old Francis broke it  
up before they even got started.

They both quietly shake their head at the injustice of it.

FATHER

Yeah. -- Well, Old Francis always  
did hold a pretty tight rein.

He takes a couple of puffs on his pipe then turns fatherly  
again.

FATHER

You haven't been doing any  
fightin', have you?

HENRY

No, sir.

Father nods...again, slightly disappointed.

FATHER

Hmm. -- You still keeping that diary aren't you?

HENRY

Yes, sir. Every day.

FATHER

Good.

They are quiet again...then Father smiles at a fond memory.

FATHER

You know, we used to do our fightin' across the alley, behind Duncan's tall fence. Old Francis couldn't see us over there.

(he chuckles, then sighs)

Yeah. I don't think that fence is there anymore.

He puffs wistfully on his pipe.

Henry decides the moment is ripe.

HENRY

You know that band leader what played the cornet the other night?

FATHER

Hmm? What band leader?

HENRY

The one at the rally.

Father's brooding frown returns.

FATHER

Oh. The rally. What about him?

Henry's not so confident now.

HENRY

Um...Well. I was just thinking that...well, that a cornet, like what he had, that...that was a pretty good thing...for him.

Father just looks at him quizzically for a moment, then...

AT THE FRONT GATE

Jim calls out cheerily.

JIM  
Hey, George! You ready to go?

Father sighs heavily and taps out his pipe.

FATHER  
I suppose.

He joins Jim at the gate and they walk away as Jim rattles on excitedly.

JIM  
Well, George, I'm glad you finally signed up, 'cause we've got a lot to work to do. -- See ya, Henry! -- We got a letter from the central campaign office this afternoon and they've mapped out the whole strategy...

Henry sinks his chin into his hands and watches Father walk away.

INT. PARLOR - DAY

Henry and Aunt Sarah sit together on the sofa. He reads aloud from a Bible while she steadily sews throughout.

HENRY  
(reading carefully)  
Examine me -- Oh Lord -- and try my ri...ree...

Aunt Sarah glances over.

AUNT SARAH  
Reins.

HENRY  
Reins. Try my reins -- and my heart. For I have -- hated the con-- congregation of evil doers and will not sit -- with -- with the wicked.

Aunt Sarah nods her fervent agreement.

AUNT SARAH  
"And I will not sit with the wicked." Mmm. Mmm. Mmm. Words to live by, Henry. Words to live by.

Henry nods along with her.

HENRY

Yes, Ma'am. Those are good words,  
alright.

She smiles at him.

AUNT SARAH

Well, I think that's all we'll read  
today.

Henry nods, closes the Bible and watches Aunt Sarah  
concentrate on her sewing.

He has something to say but hasn't quite worked out how to  
start...so...he just starts.

HENRY

Tady Finton and Pozzy Chadwick had  
a fight at school the other day.

Aunt Sarah shakes her head at the tragedy of it.

AUNT SARAH

Oh, it's just dreadful to have  
young boys fighting and growing up  
tough thataway.

Henry nods in solemn agreement.

HENRY

Yes ma'am. I know.  
(he pauses for effect,  
then presses on)  
It is hard sometimes though -- not  
bein' tough I mean -- when all the  
other fellers are bein' tough.

AUNT SARAH

Well, that's just the time when you  
need to turn your eyes to God and  
let Him guide you away from such  
doin's.

Henry frowns.

HENRY

Yes ma'am. That's a good plan.

He's quiet for a moment then tries another approach.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You know that band leader from  
Boston what plays the cornet?

AUNT SARAH

Hmm. No. No, I don't believe I do.

HENRY

Oh. Well, he plays the cornet at socials and such, and he is real good. He can even play with one hand!

AUNT SARAH

Oh. That must be nice.

HENRY

Yes ma'am, it is. Anyhow, I don't think he's too tough.

Aunt Sarah looks up from her sewing.

AUNT SARAH

Oh...well...No...I don't suppose he would be.

HENRY

No, ma'am. And I don't think he fights, nor swears neither.

AUNT SARAH

Oh?...Well...that's good.

HENRY

Yes ma'am. I know it is.

(he puts on a solemn tone)

I know how you don't like me bein' tough and all, and, well, I was just thinkin' that, maybe -- well, maybe it would be easier for me to not be so tough, if --

(he glances at her hopefully)

If I was to have a cornet!

Aunt Sarah turns to him.

AUNT SARAH

A cornet?

HENRY

(getting excited now)

Yes ma'am. I figured, if I had a cornet then I wouldn't be so tempted to be tough all the time.

AUNT SARAH

Oh...uh...No?

HENRY

No, ma'am. And Mr. Gorham's got a real fine cornet in the window of his shop. And it's only twenty-five dollars!

Aunt Sarah gasps.

HENRY

Well, I...I already have some of my own money saved. I just need a little bit more and...

(he's losing her)

...well...I just thought it might help me not be so tough.

AUNT SARAH

Yes, well...twenty-five dollars. Henry, I'm--I'm glad you want to be a good boy and all but -- I think twenty-five dollars is something you had best talk to your father about.

That's just what he didn't want to hear.

HENRY

Yes, ma'am.

Henry sinks into the sofa and Aunt Sarah retreats to her sewing.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

The Shute family is seated around the table, quietly eating dinner.

Frankie squishes potatoes through his fingers while Mother concentrates on getting a bite into his mouth.

Father watches with a cocked eyebrow, then shakes his head and returns to eating.

Henry studies Father from the corner of his eye, trying to suss out his mood. It's hard to tell. He's just looking at his plate and eating.

Henry glances across the table at Aunt Sarah for help, but she quickly looks away and studiously avoids eye-contact.

Henry frowns and forks and bite into his mouth.

Cele furtively glances around the table, and then sneaks her green beans from her plate into the napkin on her lap. No one notices.

Henry looks at Father, screws up his courage, takes a deep breath and is about to speak when...

MOTHER  
 (still calmly feeding  
 Frankie)  
 Celia. Put those beans back on your  
 plate and eat 'em.

Cele is astounded and embarrassed that she was caught and sheepishly puts the beans back.

Father smirks, boyishly amused by Cele's plight. Then...

MOTHER  
 (still calmly feeding  
 Frankie)  
 And, George.

Father looks up with a mouthful of food.

FATHER  
 Mmmm?

MOTHER  
 Could you please finish mending the  
 back fence this week. It's been  
 nearly a month.

Father, now having his moment on the hot seat, glances around the table. Aunt Sarah and the kids quickly look at their plates.

FATHER  
 Yeah. I'll -- uh -- I'll get to it  
 on Sunday.

Mother gets a bite into Frankie's mouth.

MOTHER  
 Good boy.

Father gruffly stabs a bite and forks it into his mouth.

Henry can read his mood now. He sighs and turns to Mother.

She gets another bite into Frankie's mouth and laughs sweetly. So patient. So understanding.

Henry smiles with renewed hope.

EXT. HENRY'S BACKYARD - DAY

A billowy, white sheet fills the screen, then falls, revealing Henry in mid-sentence.



HENRY  
 (excited)  
 Yeah. And it has little curly  
 markings on it, too!

Mother unpins more laundry from the line and drapes it over  
 Henry's outstretched arms.

MOTHER  
 My, that sounds nice.

HENRY  
 Yeah. And it's real shiny! I think  
 it's made of gold.

MOTHER  
 Gold? Well. -- Put those in the  
 basket.

Henry goes to the laundry basket at the end of the line,  
 dumps his arm load of laundry, and brings the basket back to  
 Mother.

HENRY  
 I was down there today after school  
 and it's still there in the window.  
 It ain't been bought yet.

MOTHER  
 (correcting him)  
 It hasn't been bought yet.

HENRY  
 No ma'am. It ain't! It's still  
 there.

Mother smiles at her failed English lesson, drapes the last  
 sheet over her arm and turns toward the house.

MOTHER  
 Well, you can ask Father about it  
 when he comes home tonight.

Henry stops in his tracks and just watches her walk away.

MOTHER  
 Bring the basket.

Henry sighs, grabs up the basket and shuffles after her.

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Henry stands outside, looking at his cornet in the window.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 I ain't had any luck with Aunt  
 Sarah or Mother...

He glances up at Mr. Gorham who is at the counter, sorting sheet music. He takes a deep breath and walks into the store.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

Henry goes to the counter, lays down his money and talks to Mr. Gorham. We don't hear what they are saying.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 So today, I went to see if Mr.  
 Gorham would hold that cornet for  
 me on trust.

Mr. Gorham looks at the money on the counter and then back at Henry. He laughs and shakes his head. Henry scrapes his money off the counter and shuffles out the door with a sullen expression.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 He wouldn't.

Henry glances at the cornet in the window, then mopes away.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

Henry sits in the same hard, straight-backed wooden chair as before.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 Well, I finally asked Father about  
 my cornet tonight...

Father paces in front of him, orating grandly on the trials of his boyhood and dramatically miming the many chores he had to do: digging ditches, plowing fields, milking cows.

Mother and Aunt Sarah sit against the wall, witnesses to this important life lesson that he is teaching his son. We don't hear what he says but Henry fills us in.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 ...And he said that when he was a  
 boy he had to work like time,  
 digging ditches, milking cows,  
 mending fences, tending chickens  
 and whole lot more that I forgot.  
 And he said he didn't get nothing  
 for it but a little crust a bread.

Father gestures with his thumb and forefinger very close together to indicate just how small that crust of bread was.

Mother rolls her eyes and Aunt Sarah wags her head disapprovingly.

Henry quietly accepts his lesson.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 Father says if I am to have my  
 cornet...

EXT. MRS. EBBERLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry hesitantly enters the front gate.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 ...I will have to earn it.

He walks onto the porch and knocks on the door. An elderly woman, MRS. EBBERLY, answers.

HENRY  
 Hello, Mrs. Ebberly. I'm Henry  
 Shute. I live down the street from  
 you.

MRS. EBBERLY  
 Yes. I know who you are. You're  
 George Shute's boy.

HENRY  
 Yes ma'am.

MRS. EBBERLY  
 My yes, your father was certainly a  
 rascal when he was your age. You  
 look just like him. I hope you're  
 not a rascal.

HENRY  
 No ma'am. I ain't -- I mean, I'm  
 not.

MRS. EBBERLY  
 Well, that's good to hear. Now how  
 can I help you, dear.

HENRY  
 Well, I was wonderin' if you had  
 any chores that need doin'. I am  
 tryin' to get some money so I can  
 buy me a cornet.

MRS. EBBERLY  
A cornet. Well, isn't that nice.  
Come in, come in. I'm sure we can  
find something for you to do.

EXT. MRS. EBBERLY'S HOUSE - LATER

Henry sweeps the porch. Mrs. Ebberly smiles and watches.

LATER

Henry drags a heavy barrel of trash across the backyard  
toward the alley.

LATER

Henry tries to herd a fat goose, nearly as tall as he is,  
into a pen but she's not cooperating.

MRS. EBBERLY  
Don't scare her now.

The goose hisses menacingly at Henry and he backs up.

EXT. MRS. EBBERLY'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Henry stands on the front porch with Mrs. Ebberly, tired and  
streaked with sweat and dirt. Mrs. Ebberly pokes her finger  
around inside her coin purse and comes up with a NICKEL. She  
smiles and places the coin in Henry's hand.

He looks at it with awe. His first earned money.

MRS. EBBERLY  
There you go. Now, when you get  
that cornet, I want you to come  
play me a tune, alright?

HENRY  
Yes, ma'am! I will!

He clenches the nickel in his fist and dashes for home,  
calling back over his shoulder.

HENRY  
Good night!

MRS. EBBERLY  
Good night.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW

Henry excitedly tells Father and Mother about his day at work.

HENRY (V.O.)

When I told Father about all the work I did for Mrs. Ebberly and about my nickel, he just started laughin'. Mother told him to stop teasin'.

She slaps Father's arm.

HENRY (V.O.)

I don't know what he was teasin' about. Anyhow, now I have got one dollar and twenty-seven cents for my cornet!

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Father is nodding off. Mother nudges him and when his eyes open he sees Mrs. Lewis looking back at him. She smiles.

Father returns a weak smile.

HENRY (V.O.)

Mrs. Lewis caught up with Father again at church today...

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

ON THE BACK PORCH

Father and Henry fasten a loose window shutter...

AT THE CHICKEN COOP

They mend a break in the chicken pen fence and...

IN THE GARDEN

With great difficulty, they plant a SCARECROW.

Father is resentful the whole time and Henry studiously imitates his furrowed brow.

HENRY (V.O.)

...And we had to do chores at her house all afternoon.

(MORE)

HENRY (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Mother says I can't work for money  
on Sundays, so I didn't get paid  
nothin'.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry walks along the street looking at the houses. He notices one with a few weeds growing in the garden.

HENRY (V.O.)  
After school today I went 'round  
lookin' for more chores.

He goes onto the porch and knocks on the door. It opens.

He smiles brightly.

IN THEIR GARDEN

He hoes weeds.

EXT. ANOTHER HOUSE - DAY

AT THE WOOD PILE

Henry splits kindling.

AT THE RAIN BARREL

He grimaces while skimming out slimy gunk.

EXT. BIG PORCH - DAY

The porch wraps around three sides of the house. Henry sweeps up a dust storm.

He finishes and turns to survey his work. A veil of dust hangs in the air around him. He coughs.

HENRY (V.O.)  
I made twelve more cents!

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

Old Francis once again has his switch raised over Skinny Bruce's backside.

HENRY (V.O.)  
June 13th. Skinny got licked again.

Old Francis swings and...

CUT TO:

EXT. ORNATE HOUSE - BACKYARD

...An axe blade cleanly splits a log.

HENRY (V.O.)  
And I got a really good job, today!

Henry sits on a stack of wood watching a BLACK MAN chop kindling. The man sets down his axe and wipes his face with a handkerchief.

Henry jumps down, picks up an arm load of the split kindling and carries it to a wood bin on the porch.

A YOUNG HOUSEWIFE, well-dressed and pampered, sits in a rocker on the back porch, reading a book.

Henry sneaks a shy glance at her. She smiles at him and he hurries back to the wood pile.

The man starts chopping again and Henry sits down to wait for the next load. He sneaks another glance at the young housewife.

EXT. ORNATE HOUSE - DAY

The Young Housewife stands on the porch with Henry and the Black Man. She pays them both.

The Black Man tips his hat.

BLACK MAN  
Thank you, Ma'am.

And walks toward the front gate.

Henry looks into his hand at the money she gave him...

HENRY  
Thank You!

And excitedly dashes past the Black Man and out the gate toward home.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

AT THE WOOD PILE

Henry chops kindling...a huge, incongruous grin on his face.

HENRY (V.O.)

I had to cut my kindlin' when I got home but I didn't mind, 'cause that lady paid me a whole quarter! I will have my cornet in no time!

EXT. SCOTT BRIGHAM'S YARD - DAY

Henry, Beany, Pewt, SCOTT BRIGHAM, and WHACKER and POZZY CHADWICK, are pressed around a small bird cage.

Inside the cage are two baby squirrels piled together.

SCOTT BRIGHAM

They're flyin' squirrels. I have to keep 'em in this bird cage 'cause you never know when they might just start flyin'.

The boys are enthralled and jockey for positions to get a better look.

SCOTT BRIGHAM

I can only keep one, so I'm sellin' the other for thirty-five cents.

WHACKER

I want it!

HENRY

I want it!

WHACKER

I said it first!

Henry frowns.

SCOTT BRIGHAM

You got your money?

WHACKER

Not on me. I gotta go home and get it.

HENRY

That ain't fair! He don't even have his money.

SCOTT BRIGHAM

You got your money on ya?

HENRY

Well...no...but...



SCOTT BRIGHAM

Well then, I don't see no fair way  
to do it, 'cept to say the first  
one back with his money gets 'im.

Henry and Whacker lock eyes for an instant, and then each bolts out of the yard.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry runs full-speed down the street, slips through the gap in the front fence and bounds up the porch steps.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

Henry takes the stairs three at a time.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - DAY

Henry bursts into the room, dives under the bed for his treasure chest, spills the contents across the bed and starts counting coins...then STOPS.

He spots the cornet doodle he drew in class and a nagging moment of indecision grips him. Flying squirrel or cornet?

The moment passes and he dashes out, money in hand.

EXT. HENRY'S BACKYARD - DAY

Henry holds up a little wooden cage and looks in at the ball of fur, expecting at any moment to see it leap to flight.

HENRY (V.O.)

Whacker wanted my squirrel but I  
beat him. -- I can't wait to see  
him fly!

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

Old Francis reads aloud a passage from some dry, old tome.

Henry sits at his desk, fidgety and anxious.

HENRY (V.O.)

I don't see how a feller can be  
expected to learn anythin' when  
he's got a flying squirrel waitin'  
for him.

He looks out the window, into the sky.

HENRY (V.O.)  
I sure hope my squirrel don't fly  
before I get home.

EXT. HENRY'S BACKYARD - DAY

Henry runs around the corner of the house, straight for his squirrel cage and looks inside.

A deep frown spreads across his face.

EXT. HENRY'S BACKYARD - DAY

IN A BACK CORNER OF THE YARD

Henry fills in a small grave. The empty wooden cage lays at his feet. Surrounding him, are a number of tiny grave markers of other unlucky pets.

HENRY (V.O.)  
My flyin' squirrel never did fly.  
(sighs)  
And now thirty-five cents of my  
cornet money has gone up.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The Shute family exits the church. Jim Melcher spots Father and comes over.

JIM  
George!

FATHER  
(unenthusiastic)  
Oh, hey Jim.

Jim throws an arm around him.

JIM  
Angela, Sarah. May I take George  
away from you for a short while?

MOTHER  
Take him for as long as you like.

JIM

Oh, I'll have him back soon. I can't stand him for too long, myself.

They all laugh at Father's expense and Jim pulls him away, leaning in close and talking excitedly.

Henry watches Mrs. Lewis approach Father and Jim but the two men walk right past without noticing her. She stands awkwardly for a moment, then walks off.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry, Beany and Pewt are gathering their fishing gear on the front porch, about to leave.

HENRY (V.O.)

I wanted to look for jobs today but Mother still won't let me work on Sundays. So me and Beany and Pewt decided to go fishin'.

Jim Melcher pulls up in his buggy and starts unloading a stack of sign-making material.

Father comes out of the house, unenthusiastic about the coming task.

JIM

Hey, George! Well, here it is. All you have to do is nail 'em together and paint 'em white. Charlie's gonna do the lettering. Oh, and be sure to sand the handles really well. We don't want any of our volunteers getting wounded.

(he laughs)

Think you can have 'em ready by next Sunday?

FATHER

I suppose.

JIM

Good. Good. This is a great help, George. Thanks for volunteering.

Father grunts and nods.

JIM

Well, I'll leave you to it. See ya boys.

Jim climbs into his buggy and drives away. The boys head for the front gate with their fishing gear but Father stops them.

FATHER

Hey! Help me get this stuff to the back.

The boys glance at each other with silent groans.

EXT. HENRY'S BACKYARD - LATER

Father supervises while the three boys reluctantly hammer, sand and paint.

HENRY (V.O.)

Father had us makin' signs all afternoon! And we never did get to go fishin'.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

Skinny tightens up his face as Old Francis winds up behind him. The switch falls...

WHIP PAN to Henry watching with disinterest.

HENRY (V.O.)

Skinny got licked today...

LATER THAT DAY

Repeat the same action: Skinny grimaces. The switch falls...

WHIP PAN to Henry watching with disinterest.

HENRY (V.O.)

...Twice.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Henry walks along the sidewalk, dragging a stick across storefronts, hitching posts, signs, benches and anything else within reach.

HENRY (V.O.)

Father had more signs to make today, so after school, I went downtown.

A Policeman, OLD KEYS, chats with a couple of ladies who are out shopping.

As Henry approaches, the clatter of his stick against the building snatches Old Keys' attention and he shoots Henry a hard "cease and desist" warning look.

Henry gets the message and lowers his stick as he walks around the policeman and the two ladies.

Old Keys keeps a hard eye on him until he rounds the corner out of sight.

A moment later, we hear Henry's stick resume scraping and banging across the storefronts.

Old Keys fumes.

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Henry looks through the window.

HENRY (V.O.)

I stopped by Gorham's to check on  
my cornet and it is still there.

He smiles, then notices Mr. Gorham eyeballing him from inside. He takes a last look at the cornet and walks away.

Mr. Gorham cranes his neck to keep an eye on him until he's out of sight.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Henry sits on the sidewalk, stirring his stick in the dirt. SY SMITH, the grocer, comes out of his store and begins sweeping the walk.

A moment later, a short, stout WOMAN pokes her head out of the store to complain.

WOMAN CUSTOMER

Mr. Smith. You put the canning jars  
too high up on the shelf. I can't  
reach 'em.

Sy stops sweeping and is quietly annoyed by the interruption.

SY SMITH

Alright. Just a minute.

He glances briefly at his unfinished job, and turns to go inside...but Henry blocks his way.

HENRY

I'll finish sweepin' for you, for a nickel.

Sy hesitates. The woman cocks her head impatiently.

SY SMITH

I don't want to see a speck'a dust when you're done.

Sy hands the broom to Henry and he starts sweeping.

HENRY (V.O.)

Sy Smith gimme a coupl'a jobs this afternoon!

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Henry struggles to stack heavy bags of beans and flour almost as big as he is.

HENRY (V.O.)

Some was hard...

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Henry carries a box of trash to the alley and dumps it into a barrel. He notices a catalogue in the trash, picks it out, flips through a few pages, then tosses it back.

HENRY (V.O.)

And some was easy.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Henry dashes out the front door, waving back over his shoulder at Sy.

HENRY (V.O.)

And he gave me ten cents!

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

Skinny Bruce sits at his desk with a big grin.

HENRY (V.O.)

Skinny didn't get licked today...

WHIP PAN to TADY FINTON'S face scrunched up tight.

HENRY (V.O.)

...Tady Finton did.

The switch falls...

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Henry walks along the street wearing a sandwich board, advertising for the auctioneers, Elkins and Graves.

HENRY (V.O.)  
And I got a real good job today.

He rings a brass hand bell and shouts.

HENRY  
Auction! Auction! Tonight at Elkins  
and Graves! Auction at Elkins and  
Graves! Auction!

Beany tags along and shouts, also.

BEANY  
Auction! Elkins and Graves. Auction  
tonight! Auction!

Between the clanging bell and the competing shouts they are very nearly incomprehensible.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

A small group of MEN and WOMEN steps out of a restaurant. Henry and Beany pass by, clanging and shouting. The women cover their ears and the men glare angrily as they escort the women away.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

Henry rings the bell wildly.

HENRY  
Auction! There's gonna be a auction  
at Elkins and Graves! Auction  
tonight!

BEANY  
Tonight! Auction! Tonight at Elkins  
and Graves! Auction!  
(he reaches for the bell)  
Here. Lemme ring some.

Henry evades his grasp.

HENRY  
No.

BEANY

C'mon.

HENRY

No. I'm s'posed to be the only one  
ringing it.

(he walks on)

Auction! Auction!

Beany frowns and falls in behind him.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Henry and Beany talk to an old man with tattered trousers,  
sitting in a doorway. Henry shows him his sign. The man  
listens and nods and takes a swig from a bottle.

EXT. WELL - DAY

Henry and Beany lean over the edge into the well. We can hear  
the ECHO of their voices and the ringing bell.

BEANY

Let me try.

HENRY

No.

BEANY

C'mon.

HENRY

No!

Henry's feet slip...and...HE TIPS INTO THE WELL...just  
catching himself before toppling in. Without missing a beat,  
he just keeps ringing the bell and arguing with Beany.

BEANY

C'mon. Let me try.

HENRY

No.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

Henry and Beany walk slowly. Worn out and hoarse.

HENRY

Auction. -- Auction.



BEANY  
 Auction. Elkins and...  
 (he fades out)

People pass them without paying much attention.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

Henry and Beany sit on the ground, leaning against a fence. The sandwich board lays on the ground next to them.

Henry notices A WOMAN across the street come onto her front porch to shake out a dust rag.

He rings the bell a couple of times and makes a half-hearted wave to get her attention.

She waves back and goes inside.

Henry leans back against the fence.

INT. ELKINS AND GRAVES - DAY

Henry watches MR. ELKINS fish a coin from his vest pocket. He hands Henry a dime.

MR. ELKINS  
 There you go, young man.

HENRY  
 (hoarsely)  
 Thank you.

Henry stuffs the coin into his pocket and, reluctantly, as if giving up his favorite pet, he sets the bell on the counter.

HENRY  
 Here's your bell.

EXT. DOWN TOWN STREET - LATER

Henry and Beany shuffle tiredly. Beany spots the soda fountain.

BEANY  
 Hey, let's get a soda water!

Henry pauses, tempted, then quickens his pace.

HENRY  
 No. I can't.

Beany chases after him.

BEANY  
Aw, c'mon.

HENRY  
No, I said.

BEANY  
Why not?

HENRY  
I just can't, that's all.

BEANY  
Well, then give me have my half and  
I'll get my own soda.

HENRY  
You don't have a half.

Beany stops him.

BEANY  
Whaddya mean? I hollered just as  
much as you did!

HENRY  
I didn't ask you to. It was my job.  
You just tagged along.

BEANY  
That ain't fair and you know it!

They hold their ground...glaring at one another for a long,  
tense moment.

HENRY  
It's for my cornet!

He spins and walks away.

BEANY  
Well you can just be friends with  
your cornet then! 'Cause you ain't  
mine no more!

And he stomps off in the opposite direction.

EXT. JIM MELCHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Father and Henry unload the finished signs from their buggy.  
Jim inspects them and nods approvingly.

JIM

These look fine. Just fine. Thank you, George. You did a great job.

Father shrugs.

FATHER

Ah, it wasn't so much.

Henry looks up at him and Father glances away.

JIM

No, no. These are really helpful. Charlie'll get the lettering done and we can use them for July 4th as well as the August rally. Oh, speaking of the 4th, I'd like you to come to a meeting with me that night at General Marston's.

FATHER

Oh...well...I was sorta planning to go to the fireworks show. I mean... I promised Henry and his sisters I'd take 'em.

Henry looks at Father. He doesn't recall that promise.

JIM

Oh, don't worry. We'll be done before the first rocket goes off. It's important. Can I count on you?

Father hesitates, then reluctantly nods.

JIM

Good. Good.  
(he turns to Henry)  
So Henry, how do like your Pa working in politics? Pretty exciting, huh?

HENRY

(he shrugs)  
I s'pose.

JIM

(laughs)  
Well, you take my word. He's doing a good thing. Standing up and taking his place in the world. Just like you will someday.

Henry glances at Father who shifts uncomfortably.

FATHER

Yeah, well, we oughta get going.

Father and Henry climb into the buggy.

JIM

Thanks again, George.

Father nods and snaps the reins.

INT. SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

Old Francis is at the blackboard breaking a sentence into its grammatical parts. The class listens numbly.

Henry catches Beany's eye and gives him a friendly nod.

Beany scowls and turns away.

Henry frowns.

HENRY (V.O.)

Beany is still mad with me.

Henry crosses his arms and looks away.

HENRY (V.O.)

Well he can just be mad forever if he wants to.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

IN THE GARDEN

Henry and Father hoe weeds.

HENRY (V.O.)

Mrs. Lewis caught up with Father again today and we had to hoe weeds in her garden.

Henry glumly pokes his hoe at the ground. Father grinds his into the dirt and grouses under his breath.

He backs into the SCARECROW they put up earlier and leans it over, just short of toppling. He grunts an inaudible curse, makes a cursory attempt to straighten it, then just leaves it that way.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' HOUSE - LATER

Mrs. Lewis waves from the front porch as Henry and Father walk away.

MRS. LEWIS  
Bye, now!

Father throws open the front gate and it comes off its hinge. He yanks it back into place, shoots an annoyed, embarrassed glance at Mrs. Lewis, and stomps out. Henry follows, imitating Father's gruff stomp.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

The school house stands in the shade of a large tree. All is peaceful and still until...

THE DOORS BURST OPEN and a flood of shouting kids spills out!

HENRY (V.O.)  
School's out for summer...!

EXT. SWIMMING HOLE - DAY

HENRY (V.O.)  
...And we went swimmin'!

Whacker swings from a rope tied to a tree and drops into the water. Henry, Beany, Pewt, Pozzy and Skinny swim and splash around him.

Beany swims up behind Henry and DUNKS him hard.

Henry pops up...sputtering...GRABS Beany and...

They both go down...then up again...laughing!

HENRY (V.O.)  
Beany dunked me and I dunked him  
back, so we ain't mad no more!

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Henry, Beany, Pewt, Whacker, Pozzy and Skinny rush down the street and into Sy Smith's grocery store.

HENRY (V.O.)  
(excited)  
July 1st...

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

The boys swarm into the store...startling Sy and his customers...and surround the fireworks stand.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...Snapcrackers have come!

They boys grab fist-fulls of fireworks.

Henry tries to resist...but the frenzy overtakes him and he grabs into the pile with the rest.

He holds up a Roman candle and his eyes widen at the possibilities.

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Henry and the boys walk past the music shop with their arms full of fireworks and excitedly talking about all of the things they are going to blow up!

HENRY (V.O.)  
I got 10 bunches of snapcrackers,  
some slowmatch and a cannon!  
(a guilty pause)  
I had to spend a dollar of my  
cornet money. But...snapcrackers  
only come once a year!

Henry walks right past the cornet in the window without even slowing down for a glance.

EXT. HENRY'S STREET - MORNING

Sunlight peers over the rooftops. It's quiet. Then...

POW! A firecracker goes off in the distance. Dogs bark.

A LONE BOY tears around the corner of a house, dashes across the street and out of sight behind another house.

More firecrackers explode in the distance and then, as if launched by a starting pistol...

Henry, Beany and Pewt bolt from their front doors simultaneously, fists and pockets full of explosives!

HENRY (V.O.)  
July 4th! Snapcracker Day!

Father follows Henry onto the porch and watches the boys rush up the street, leaving tiny explosions in their wake.

You just know he wants to go with them but mother steps up beside him with a concerned expression and his smile changes to a solemn head-shake.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

(A Montage of "death defying" fireworks escapades.)

Whacker holds a Roman candle (a cannon) while Beany lights it. All the boys jump back. Whacker raises the cannon above his head, closes his eyes and turns his face away.

The fuse hisses and smokes and the cannon slowly dips toward the boys.

BEANY

Hold it up!

It fires, whizzing low over their heads. Startled, Whacker drops it and it fires again, this time right at the boys. They scatter, laughing.

CUT TO

Beany lighting a twisted knot of firecrackers and setting a tin can over them.

He runs back to the other boys, hiding behind a fence and they all watch the can - anxiously waiting for it to explode.

CUT TO

Henry lighting a firecracker and tossing it to Beany who swats it with a stick down the street toward the other boys.

They dodge the falling firecracker and laugh when it explodes amongst them.

CUT TO

Pewt holding a firecracker in one hand and a lighting wick in the other. He lights the firecracker and quickly tosses...the WICK!

The boys follow it to the ground with anticipation before Beany realizes the error...

BEANY

Pewt!

...And slaps the firecracker from Pewt's hand just as it explodes. They laugh.

PEWT

Okay, okay. Let me try another one!

CUT TO

The boys anxiously watching that overturned can...

CUT TO

Henry focusing on a delicate operation but we can't see what. He smiles like a mad scientist and...

Raises up a mushy apple, bristling with firecrackers.

CUT TO

Henry's face smudged by gunpowder and bits of apple. He squirms as Mother washes his face in the rain barrel.

Freshly washed, he dashes across the yard to rejoin the others. Mother calls after him.

MOTHER

Be careful!

CUT TO

An empty street...

The boys run through frame, laughing and looking back at...

Skinny, chasing after them with a firing cannon!

CUT TO

The boys waiting for that can to explode.

BEANY

It's a dud.

They exchange uncertain glances.

BEANY

Pewt, go check it.

PEWT

I'm not goin'. It's Pozzy's turn.

Pozzy backs up, shaking his head. They look back at the can.

BEANY

I bet it's a dud.

CUT TO



Skinny standing alone in the center of the road, pointing his cannon into the sky. Nothing.

He tilts it toward him, trying to look inside. He shakes it.

He tilts it further toward him. Still nothing.

He looks right into the barrel!

CUT TO

That tin can, alone and forgotten. No one in sight. Then...

A muffled pop, a little smoke and the can falls over.

EXT. GENERAL MARSTON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Henry and the boys walk by General Marston's house, excitedly reliving the day's adventures. Henry stops at the front gate.

HENRY

I gotta wait for my Pa. I'll see  
you fellas later.

The boys wave and continue down the street toward the town square.

Henry goes to the front porch. He can hear the men's voices coming from inside and spots them, through an open window, gathered in General Marston's office.

It looks like the meeting is still going strong. He frowns and sits on a bench by the window to wait.

INT. GENERAL MARSTON'S OFFICE - EVENING

Cigar smoke hangs over the dimly lit room. Firecrackers explode randomly in the distance.

General Marston, Jim Melcher, TOM NEWSOME and three other men are seated about the room on plush sofas and stuffed arm-chairs, smoking cigars, drinking, and talking.

Father is seated in the only hard, straight-backed chair in the room, awkwardly holding a glass of whiskey in one hand and a cigar in the other - with nowhere to rest either one.

TOM

Oh, yes sir. We're ready for them,  
General. The Democrats don't stand  
a hair's breadth of a chance in  
this state.

GENERAL MARSTON

Well, I don't want to give them even that.

TOM

No Sir. Of course not.

JIM

General, you know better than anyone that Exeter has always answered the call to arms. And this instance will be no different. This rally will be one to remember.

Boisterous agreement from the others.

GENERAL MARSTON

(an approving grunt)

Mmm.

Father looks for a place to set down his drink. He turns to the desk...it's too much of a stretch. He moves to set it on the rug...but thinks better of it.

JIM

We have an excellent military band coming up from Boston and a very distinguished panel of local speakers.

GENERAL MARSTON

Who do we have?

JIM

Well, there's Tom, and Major Wingate, and Captain Harding, yourself, of course, and...well...I was thinking of opening the program with a short speech from someone new. Kind of a fresh face in the party, someone everyone in town knows and likes.

The General nods, interested.

GENERAL MARSTON

Hmmm.

JIM

I was thinking of -- George here.

Father hears his name and looks up...whiskey in one hand, cigar in the other...to find everyone in the room looking at him.

General Marston frowns skeptically.

GENERAL MARSTON

Mmmmm.

EXT. GENERAL MARSTON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Father, Henry, Jim and the other men stand at the gate saying good night. When the last man leaves, Father abruptly turns to Jim.

FATHER

What'd you go and say that for!?

JIM

What?

FATHER

About me givin' a speech!

JIM

Well, you said you wanted to help out.

FATHER

I meant as a sign carrier or nailing up banners or somethin' simple like that! I never gave a speech in front of people before!

JIM

(chuckles)

Oh, don't worry about it, you're gonna do fine. Now, I gotta catch up with my family at the fireworks show. I'll see you later.

Jim strides off, leaving Father frowning.

Henry watches a rocket shoot up from the town square and explode above them. He looks expectantly at Father.

Father huffs and stalks off toward the town square. Henry trots after him.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

A large crowd is gathered in the square and on balconies and rooftops. Father's signs, with freshly painted slogans praising GRANT AND COLFAX, appear sporadically throughout the crowd.

The fire wagon and firemen are poised nearby.

A tremendous firework lights up the sky!

Mother, Frankie, Aunt Sarah, Cele and Keene are in the crowd looking up at the exploding lights. Father and Henry join them.

After a few moments, Father's frown softens and he takes Frankie in one arm and puts the other around Mother.

A colorful explosion rains sparks and the crowd "ooohs" and "awwwws".

Sparks fall into a wagon, igniting a pile of debris. The small fire is quickly extinguished by a couple of firemen and the crowd cheers and applauds them.

Father's eyes move across the sky from one explosion to the next. He smiles.

An exploding missile lights up Henry's smiling face. All is right with the world.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - MORNING

Henry lies in bed...staring up at the ceiling with a hopeless expression. He sighs heavily.

HENRY (V.O.)  
July 5th. I have forty-nine cents.

INT. FATHER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Father lies in bed...staring up at the ceiling. He sighs heavily.

FATHER  
How the hell am I gonna get outta  
this speech?

Mother, lying in bed next to him, turns her head to look at him but doesn't say anything.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Mrs. Lewis stands at the bottom of the steps searching the crowd on the lawn for Father...her back to the church door.

ON THE STEPS

Father comes out of the church...sees her first and crouches down. Pulling Henry with him, they slip down the steps behind the crowd.

Half-way down they run into Minister Gilkey who gives them a stern glare.

Father just nods sheepishly and they slip under the stair-rail and around the corner of the church before Mrs. Lewis can spot them.

HENRY (V.O.)

Mrs. Lewis was lookin' for Father today but he saw her first and we skinned round back. I don't know why I had to go, she wasn't lookin' for me.

EXT. WILDFLOWER FIELD - DAY

Henry, Beany and Pewt wade through the wildflowers.

HENRY (V.O.)

It's Sunday again and Mother won't let me work for money, so we went toad huntin'.

A toad peeks over the top of Pewt's shirt pocket and Beany watches him gently tap it back down.

BEANY

I can't believe we couldn't find but one toad.

PEWT

Still too early, I guess.

Henry stops to inspect a bee buzzing around a flower. Pewt joins him. They watch the bee move from flower to flower, then fly off.

Henry pulls up a couple of flowers and inspects them, trying to figure out some aspect of bee behavior.

Pewt starts picking flowers.

PEWT

My Ma likes it when I bring her wild flowers. Those for your ma?

Henry hadn't thought about it until now. He shrugs.

HENRY

Sure.

And he and Pewt move off through the field gathering flowers. Beany morosely brings up the rear.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Henry, Beany and Pewt walk along the road in front of the High School. Henry and Pewt each have a fat fistful of flowers.

A high school student, JOHNNY HEALD, paces nervously in front of the school, waiting for someone. He sees the boys and calls out.

JOHNNY  
Hey fellas!

And trots over.

JOHNNY  
(friendly)  
Hey!

PEWT  
(suspicious)  
Hey.

JOHNNY  
Say, where'd you get those flowers?

HENRY  
Up by the creek bend. Why?

Behind Johnny, band rehearsal has just ended and students, carrying band instruments, emerge from the school. Johnny glances over his shoulder at...

ELIZABETH. She comes out of the school with a group of other girls, talking and giggling.

He turns back to the boys and moves closer, his voice taking on a conspiratorial tone.

JOHNNY  
Say, you 'spose I could get some of those flowers off you?

Pewt twists his body away to keep his flowers out of reach.

PEWT  
No. We picked 'em for our Ma's.

Johnny glances at Elizabeth.

She has stopped under a tree with the other girls and flicks just the tiniest glance his way.

He turns to Henry.

JOHNNY  
How 'bout you?

Henry looks calculatingly at Elizabeth then back to Johnny.

HENRY  
I'll sell 'em to you.

JOHNNY  
Sell 'em!?

The pack of girls under the tree starts to break up and Elizabeth is trying to linger without looking like she is doing so. His moment is slipping away.

JOHNNY  
Alright. How much?

HENRY  
I'll give you the whole lot for --  
twenty-five cents.

JOHNNY  
twenty-fi--!  
(he glances at Elizabeth)  
Alright. Here.

He hands Henry a quarter, grabs the flowers and as quickly and suavely as possible hustles across the road and presents the flowers to Elizabeth. She accepts them with an excited giggle.

Henry watches her smell the bouquet, then looks at Pewt, still clutching his mother's flowers. A brief moment of regret slips across his face.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Well, I figured Mother wouldn't  
miss getting those flowers. She  
didn't even know I was bringing  
'em.

Pewt and Beany walk off. Henry glances once more at Johnny and Elizabeth and follows after them.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Anyhow, now I got twenty-five more  
cents for my cornet.

INT. OLD HAINES' STABLE - DAY

Henry sweeps out a horse stall. He pauses to wipe his sleeve across his face and sees Beany, Pewt and the other boys passing by outside, laughing and jostling one another.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 The fellers went swimmin' today,  
 but I didn't go 'cause I worked for  
 Old Haines.

Henry watches them pass, then goes back to sweeping.

EXT. OLD HAINES' STABLE - DAY

Henry, dirty and sweat-streaked, waits for his pay. Old Haines hands him a nickel, then turns and walks back into the barn without a word.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 I cleaned out six stalls and he  
 only give me a nickel!

He frowns. Then turns and slowly walks out of the yard.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Henry comes in the front door and hears

FATHER  
 Shut the damn door!

Henry quickly shuts the door and peers into the parlor...

Where Father is hunched over a small writing table, struggling with his speech, writing and mumbling to himself. Henry watches him a moment, then goes upstairs.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The Shute family exits with the crowd. Father peeks out, scanning for Mrs. Lewis. No sign of her. He smiles, and...

MRS. LEWIS  
 Mr. Shute. What a pleasure.

Mrs. Lewis steps out of the church behind him.

MOTHER  
 Hello, Mrs. Lewis.

MRS. LEWIS  
 Hello, Mrs. Shute. I sure hope you  
 don't mind that I borrow your  
 husband this afternoon. I just have  
 a few small, little things that  
 need doing.



MOTHER

Not at all, Mrs. Lewis. You put him to work. It'll keep him out of mischief.

Mother gives Father a playful look.

MRS. LEWIS

Oh, I don't know about that. But I do have a few shingles that have slid right off my roof and the garden could probably use a little more weeding. Just a few things. Now you'll probably want to bring your own hammer. I believe Mr. Lewis took the hammer when he departed...

She walks off and Father falls in behind, snagging Henry as he goes.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Henry and Father are stacking planks and shingles against the back of the house and putting tools away.

HENRY

Why does Mrs. Lewis always get you to do her chores?

FATHER

Well, she hasn't got a husband of her own to do 'em, so I guess she has to borrow one.

HENRY

Why don't she get a new husband?

FATHER

Oh, I expect she will someday. When she meets the right kinda man.

HENRY

Well, what kinda man does she need?

Father stops at that and stares off for a long moment.

FATHER

A very patient man.

Henry nods and thinks about that, and then...

HENRY

If Mrs. Lewis got a new husband,  
would you still have to do chores  
for her?

FATHER

No...No, I don't expect I would.  
Now, stop your jawin' and bring  
those nails over here. I'm ready to  
go home.

Henry carries the heavy bucket of nails to Father who roughly  
shoves it under the back porch.

HENRY (V.O.)

I bet Mr. Lewis got a divorce  
'cause Mrs. Lewis has so many dang  
chores. I guess Mr. Lewis was not a  
patient man.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Henry, loaded down with an overflowing box of groceries,  
follows a stringy, thin-lipped woman, MRS. WOLLNER, out of  
the store. She strikes off at an energetic pace and Henry  
hustles to keep up with her.

HENRY (V.O.)

Sy Smith didn't have nothing for me  
today so I helped Mrs. Wollner  
carry her groceries home.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Mrs. Wollner strides uphill briskly and is almost out of  
sight when...

Henry appears, struggling far behind. He alternates between  
trotting and walking but never seems to get any closer to  
catching up.

EXT. MRS. WOLLNER'S HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Wollner sweeps into her yard and onto the porch where  
she stands impatiently, waiting for Henry...

Who slowly staggers into the yard, and just makes it to the  
front porch before dropping the box in near exhaustion. He  
shakes his arms to restore circulation.

Mrs. Wollner considers him for a moment, then pulls a nickel  
from her coin purse, hands it to him, snatches up her box and  
goes inside, leaving Henry panting on the front porch.

Henry just looks at the nickel, then staggers back toward town.

HENRY (V.O.)  
She gave me a nickel. Sometimes it  
seems that workin' ain't hardly  
worth the trouble.

EXT. OLD HAINES' STABLE - DAY

Old Haines leans on his pitchfork with a sour face and watches...

Henry, Beany, Pewt, Skinny and Pozzy walk past the stable on their way to the swimming hole.

Old Haines shakes his head disapprovingly and goes into his barn.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Hot as time today. Old Haines had  
more stalls for me to clean out but  
he don't pay enough...

EXT. SWIMMING HOLE - DAY

Henry floats on his back in the river. Not a care in the world. The other boys splash and play in the background.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...so I went swimmin'.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Henry and Pewt run along the sidewalk, dragging sticks along the store fronts.

Sy Smith, the grocer, is carrying a sack of grain out his door toward a wagon...when...

Henry and Pewt swarm past his legs. He spins and dodges, nearly dropping the sack of grain...

Then, as quickly as they arrived, they are gone.

Sy looks after them, irritated, then continues on to the wagon with his load.

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Henry and Pewt casually walk along the sidewalk sucking on sticks of peppermint candy. They pass Gorham's window without pausing.

A beat later, Henry runs back to the window and screeches to a halt...panicked!

THE CORNET IS GONE!

He looks deeper into the store and sees Mr. Gorham talking to a MOTHER and SON, a boy about Henry's age. The boy is holding Henry's cornet and playing with the valves.

Henry is horrified.

The boy puts his mouth on the cornet!

And that's just too much. Henry screams something unintelligible.

INSIDE THE MUSIC SHOP

Mr. Gorham and the mother and son turn to see

Henry knocking on the window.

HENRY

Mr. Gorham! Mr. Gorham!

Mr. Gorham frowns.

MR. GORHAM

Excuse me.

And goes to the door.

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Mr. Gorham comes out scowling just as Old Keys, the policeman, shows up.

OLD KEYS

What's all the hollerin here?

(he recognizes Henry)

Oh, it's you again.

Pewt goes wide-eyed and silent but Henry seizes the moment.

HENRY

(pleading)

Mr. Gorham, that's MY cornet.

(MORE)

HENRY (cont'd)

I'm savin to buy it! Don't you remember?

OLD KEYS

What's he goin' on about?

MR. GORHAM

Son, I already told you I can't hold a twenty-five dollar cornet for a dollar and whatever cents it was you had when you were in here last. Now, I have customers and you boys are just gonna have to be quiet.

OLD KEYS

You mind your customers, Mr. Gorham. I'll tend to these ruffians. C'mon boys.

He drags them by their collars across the street.

OLD KEYS

Now, I don't want you goin' no closer to Mr. Gorham's shop than right here. And if I catch you closer, I'll throw you in jail and lose the key. You understand?

The boys nod obediently.

OLD KEYS

Alright, then.

He puts a finger to his eye then points at Henry.

OLD KEYS

I'll be watching you.

Old Keys walks off.

Henry turns his attention back to the store.

There appears to be some negotiating going on between the mother and Mr. Gorham. The boy smiles, fingers the valves and slobbers on the mouthpiece.

Henry turns away with a helpless expression.

The mother takes the cornet from the boy and puts it on the counter...but he picks it up again...and Mr. Gorham pushes the sale.

Again, the mother takes the cornet away from the boy and puts it on the counter.

When he reaches for it this time...she stops him. She turns to Mr. Gorham and shakes her head.

Henry sees a ray of hope.

Mr. Gorham shrugs and nods and the mother and boy exit the store. The boy whines loudly as the mother pulls him along the sidewalk.

Henry breathes a sigh of relief.

Mr. Gorham places the cornet back on it's pedestal in the window and gives Henry an angry glare.

EXT. MRS. EBBERLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry runs onto the porch and urgently knocks on her door. She opens it.

MRS. EBBERLY

My goodness what's all the fuss?

HENRY

(breathlessly)

Hello, Mrs. Ebberly. Do you have any chores I can do?

MRS. EBBERLY

Oh, well -- no. Not today, dear.

HENRY

Oh. Alright then.

He runs off. Leaving her in the doorway.

EXT. ORNATE HOUSE - DAY

(The pretty young housewife's house) Henry knocks loudly. Waits. No answer. He checks the windows; the curtains are drawn. He knocks again. Still no answer.

He runs off.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Henry pleads with Sy Smith. Sy shakes his head firmly and follows a woman customer into his store.

HENRY (V.O.)

I went all over town today, tryin' to find a job but nobody had one.

EXT. OLD HAINES' STABLE - DAY

Old Haines dismisses Henry with an angry flip of his hand and goes into the barn. Henry hangs his head and walks away.

HENRY (V.O.)

I even tried Old Haines...but he said I was too lazy to hire. I don't know what I'm gonna do. I gotta get my cornet before somebody else does.

EXT. HENRY'S PORCH - NIGHT

LOOKING IN THE FRONT WINDOW

Father sits at his writing table, working on his speech and mumbling to himself.

NOW INSIDE LOOKING OUT

A HEAD slowly raises up until the eyes barely peek over the window sill. It's Henry. Beany and Pewt's heads rise up next to his.

Father is completely pre-occupied with his speech.

Beany nods and the boys duck down, crawl to the end of the porch, slip under the railing and disappear around the side of the house.

EXT. HENRY'S CELLAR - NIGHT

Beany opens the cellar door and they slip inside.

INT. HENRY'S CELLAR - NIGHT

A large salted-pork, wrapped in cloth, hangs from a rafter in the center of the cellar. Beany crosses to it, pulls a knife from his pocket, slices off a chunk and tosses it to Henry.

BEANY

Hang on to that.

Henry gives him a skeptical look and shoves the pork into his pocket.

Beany cuts a length of twine from a spool, and they rush out.

EXT. HENRY'S CELLAR - NIGHT

The boys hustle out of the cellar. Beany shuts the door and they run off.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL YARD - NIGHT

Henry, Beany and Pewt run across the school yard and crouch in the shadows next to the school building. Pewt, the lookout, glances around nervously.

HENRY  
Alright, what do I do?

BEANY  
Get your pork out.

Henry does.

HENRY  
Now what?

BEANY  
Well...let's see. If you was tryin' to get rid of warts, this is the time you'd rub the pork on 'em.

HENRY  
I'm not tryin' to get rid'a warts. I'm tryin' to get my cornet!

BEANY  
I know that. But this is the only magic spell I know. We're just gonna have to work it around some.

Henry lets out an exasperated sigh.

BEANY  
It works on warts!

Henry just looks at him. From the distance we hear Beany's father call.

MR. WATSON (O.S.)  
El-bridge!

Beany glances over his shoulder.

BEANY  
Dang! That's my Pa. We better hurry.

He hands Henry some twine.



BEANY

Here, get a rock and tie your pork  
to it.

Henry rolls his eyes and searches the ground for a rock.

EXT. BEANY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MR. WATSON hollers.

MR. WATSON

El-bridge!

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Father comes onto the front porch, sees Mr. Watson and waves.

FATHER

Evening, Wats.

MR. WATSON

Evening, George.

(back to shouting)

El-bridge!

FATHER

Hen-ry!

MR. WATSON

El-bridge!

From up the street.

MR. PURINGTON (O.S.)

Char-les!

Father and Mr. Watson look up the street and wave to BRAD  
PURINGTON, Pewt's father.

FATHER

Evening, Brad.

MR. PURINGTON

Evening, George. Irving.

MR. WATSON

Brad.

The men nod to one another and pause for what seems to them a  
sociable length of time...then start shouting again.

MR. WATSON

Elbridge!

FATHER

Henry!

MR. PURINGTON

Charles!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL YARD - NIGHT

Pewt looks up at the sound of his father's voice.

PEWT

Now my Pa's hollerin' for me. Hurry  
up.

Henry pulls the knot tight around the pork and the rock.

HENRY

There. Now what?

Beany thinks about how to adapt his wart spell.

BEANY

Uh...Say what you wish for.

Henry shuts his eyes tightly.

HENRY

I wish I could get my cornet.

BEANY

Good. Now -- kiss it!

HENRY

What!?

BEANY

Kiss the pork.

Henry protests.

BEANY

It's part of the spell.

MR. WATSON (O.S.)

Elbridge!

MR. PURINGTON (O.S.)

Charles!

FATHER (O.S.)

Henry!

PEWT

Hurry! Just do it!

Henry closes his eyes and kisses the pork.

BEANY

Alright. Now you gotta say the spell. Close your eyes and spin around, and say it after me.

Henry closes his eyes, spins and repeats after Beany.

BEANY & HENRY

Arum, erum, irum, orum, urum, nurum. Arum, erum, irum...

A BLOCK AWAY

The GAS MAN lights a street lamp.

Henry spins and chants.

BEANY & HENRY

...orum, urum, nurum. Arum...

The Gas Man moves his wagon closer...and lights the next street lamp.

Henry spins and chants.

BEANY & HENRY

...erum, irum, orum, urum, nurum.

BEANY

Okay. Stop!

Henry stops spinning and staggers dizzily.

BEANY

Now throw it! Throw it over your shoulder!

Swooning and barely able to stand, Henry gives the rock-bound pork a blind heave...

Right through the glass of a nearby gaslight.

At the SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS, the Gas Man looks up and sees three dark shapes running away.

GAS MAN

Hey!

He jumps down from his wagon and chases after them.

The boys run across the school yard, down an alley, and under a fence just ahead of the Gas Man. He tries to crawl under but can't, so starts to climb over but the boys have already run out of sight.

EXT. HENRY'S STREET - NIGHT

The three boys are running scared and fast. Beany and Pewt peel off toward their houses and Henry bee-lines for his.

FATHER

Hen--!

(he sees Henry running up)

Didn't you hear me hollerin'. Now get straight up to bed.

Henry leaps up the stairs onto the front porch and into the house without breaking stride.

HENRY

Yes, sir!

Father is suspicious of Henry's quick acceptance of his punishment, but lets it go and follows him inside.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The Minister speaks from the pulpit.

MINISTER

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts!

Henry, nervous and guilty-looking, scrunches down in the pew and exchanges fearful glances with Beany and Pewt.

MINISTER

Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Henry and Beany stand across the street from the school, casting furtive glances at the broken street lamp. Henry spots the rock with the pork tied to it and shards of broken glass in the road. He winces and he and Beany slink away.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Henry and Beany sit in the alley, behind a trash barrel.

HENRY

You think he saw us?

BEANY

I don't know. It was pretty dark.  
He might not'a got a good look at  
us.

HENRY

(wanting to be convinced,  
but not convinced)  
Yeah.

AT THE END OF THE ALLEY

Johnny Heald and Elizabeth stop to talk. Henry and Beany can  
hear their conversation.

ELIZABETH

Alright now, you have to get that  
sheet music over to Mr. Ashman this  
afternoon. And don't forget the  
invitations. You'll have to hand  
them out today.

JOHNNY

All of them?

ELIZABETH

Of course all of them. I want this  
dance to be the best, most special  
dance ever.

Johnny nods obediently.

ELIZABETH

Now, I'm going to Mary's to work on  
the decorations. You're sure you  
know where everyone on the list  
lives?

JOHNNY

(sourly)  
Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Good. I'll see you tomorrow, then.  
Bye.

She gives him a coy smile and a cute little wave and walks  
away.

Johnny stands unhappily in her wake, then notices Henry and  
Beany and his face brightens with inspiration.

JOHNNY

Say, fellas! How'd you like to earn  
a dollar?

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Henry walks down the front steps away from a house where he has just dropped off an invitation. Beany waits at the gate with a list of names.

In the background, A TEENAGE GIRL stands in her doorway, opening the envelope. She reads it and squeals with excitement.

HENRY  
That's one.

Beany crosses a name off his list and they walk off.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Henry and Beany walk along the street, checking their list.

HENRY  
Who's next?

BEANY  
The Head sisters.

Henry gets a sour look on his face.

HENRY  
I ain't givin' them any. They  
snitched on me at school.

Beany nods, scratches the Head sisters off his list.

HENRY  
Who else you got?

Henry and Beany consult their list. Beany points to a name...Henry shakes his head..Beany scratches it out.

He points to another name...Henry shakes his head...Beany scratches it out.

He points to another one...Henry nods...and they walk off.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Me and Beany walked all over town  
today handin' out invitations.

EXT. HILL STREET - DAY

Henry and Beany stand, looking up a very steep hill.

After considering it for a moment...they turn to one another and silently nod their agreement...Beany crosses a name off the list...and they walk away.

HENRY (V.O.)  
I didn't give any to the Parmer  
girls or the Seely girls 'cause  
they lived way up on the plains and  
I didn't want to walk up there...

EXT. FACTORY NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Henry and Beany walk across the railroad tracks to a grey, weathered building. Some girls in patched dresses are playing skip rope in front.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...So when I went over to the  
Hemlock side to give one, I stopped  
at the factory boarding house and  
give some to the girls there. They  
was awful glad to get 'em, too...

Henry hands each girl an invitation and they giggle and quiver with excitement. Beany scratches some names off the list.

EXT. ANOTHER HOUSE - DAY

Henry knocks but no one answers.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...And some people was not home...

He notices a girl next door, watching her younger sister play with dolls. He waves to her. They meet at the fence and he hands the invitation to her.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...so I gave their invitations to  
the next house...

Beany scratches a name off the list and they walk off.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

Henry and Beany check over the list.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...It took us till near 7 o'clock.

BEANY  
That's everybody.

Henry holds up three left-over invitations.

HENRY  
What about these?

Beany shrugs. Henry considers them a moment, then goes to a large rock, stuffs the invitations under it and he and Beany walk away.

HENRY (V.O.)  
I don't guess those girls that didn't get their invitations will care much about going. And I bet those Head girls won't want to tell on me again. -- Anyhow, Beany let me keep his part of the dollar, so now I got nearly two whole dollars for my cornet. I guess that spell of Beany's worked.

EXT. FISHING HOLE - DAY

Henry, Beany and Pewt relax on the bank, their fishing lines dangling in the water.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Pewt was scared to be with me and Beany for a few days, but it has been about a week now since I broke that gaslight and nobody has come to arrest me. So, I guess we are alright.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry holds two pickets over the gap in the front fence while Father stands back to appraise their placement. Mother watches from the front porch.

FATHER  
That's good. Hold 'em there.

He grabs up a full bucket of nails and carries it to the fence, fishes around for a few choice ones and nails the pickets into place. While Father is busy hammering, Henry sees Mrs. Lewis striding their way.

Just as Father hammers in the last nail, she arrives.

MRS. LEWIS  
Hello Mr. Shute. How are you today?



FATHER

Oh! Mrs. Lewis. Uh...well...kinda busy today. With...uh...lotsa...  
(he waves toward the finished fence)  
...lotsa nailin'...and such.

MOTHER

Well, the fence is finished, George. I think that's all that needs to be done around here today.

Father tries to speak but nothing comes.

MOTHER

(to Mrs. Lewis)  
Did you have a few little things you need him to do for you, Mrs. Lewis?

MRS. LEWIS

Well, yes, if you're sure you don't need him around here.

MOTHER

Oh, I'm sure.

Father surrenders.

FATHER

Alright. Let me just put these things away.

He grabs the nail bucket and...suddenly...it's very heavy!

He groans, drops the bucket and puts a hand on his back.

MRS. LEWIS

What is it Mr. Shute?

Mother looks at him suspiciously.

FATHER

(dramatically gritting his teeth)  
Oooh! Nothin'. I just...mmmm...just got a crick in my back, that's all.

He glances at Mother, then away.

MRS. LEWIS

Well, you poor man. You should sit down.

Mrs. Lewis comes into the yard and helps Father to the porch steps where he sits down.

Henry watches him, not sure whether to be concerned or suspicious.

MRS. LEWIS

My husband had terrible backaches  
all the time. He could hardly work  
at all.

She touches his lower back.

MRS. LEWIS

Does it hurt here?

FATHER

Oooh. Yup. That's it.

MRS. LEWIS

(a disappointed sigh)

Well, I don't suppose you'll be  
doing any more work today.

Mother huffs and crosses her arms. Father avoids her glare.

FATHER

Well, I suppose I could try to do a  
little something.

MRS. LEWIS

No, no, no. I don't want you to  
hurt yourself any further on my  
account.

Mother gives him a threatening look.

FATHER

Well, I...I hate to leave you  
without any help Mrs. Lewis.  
(searching for a way out)  
Perhaps...perhaps Henry here could  
help you, today. He's a strong boy.

Henry turns to Father with a stunned expression. Mrs. Lewis sizes him up with a thorough look-over.

MRS. LEWIS

Hmmm. He might be able take care of  
it.

FATHER

It's settled then.  
(he puts a hand on Henry's  
shoulder)  
Henry. I want you to go with Mrs.  
Lewis, here, and do just the job  
that I would.

MRS. LEWIS  
 (to Mother)  
 Well, if it's alright?

Henry glances at Mother with a slight hope of salvation. She gives him a sympathetic look.

MOTHER  
 It's fine Mrs. Lewis.

MRS. LEWIS  
 Well, thank you both very much. I promise not to keep him long. I just have a few small, little things that need doing.

She takes the hammer from Father's hand...

MRS. LEWIS  
 He might need this.

And heads for the gate. Henry falls in behind her.

MRS. LEWIS  
 Now, I have nails, though most of them will probably need some straightening. Do you know how to saw a board? My husband couldn't saw a straight line to save his life.  
 (calling back to Mother  
 and Father)  
 Bye now.  
 (back to Henry)  
 But I imagine you could. You look like a bright boy.

Mother gives Father a stern look and goes into the house.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

IN THE GARDEN

Henry wrestles to get the SCARECROW that Father knocked over back upright. Beany and Pewt show up and watch him struggle.

PEWT  
 Hey Henry.

HENRY  
 (grunting)  
 Hey.

BEANY

Dang, I sure hope you're gettin'  
paid a lot.

HENRY

(frustrated)

I ain't gettin' paid nothin'! My Pa  
sent me over here to work so he  
wouldn't have to.

He gets the post precariously balanced in the hole, turns to  
pick up his shovel and the scarecrow starts to fall.

PEWT

Henry!

Henry dodges the falling scarecrow, and then just stands over  
it and sighs.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

Beany and Pewt hold the scarecrow while Henry digs the hole  
deeper. He finishes and tosses down his shovel.

HENRY

That oughta do.

Beany and Pewt raise the scarecrow and slide the post into  
the hole. While they hold it, Henry hammers in wedges, fills  
the hole with dirt and packs it down with his foot.

HENRY

Alright. Let it go.

Beany and Pewt carefully let go of the scarecrow and step  
back. It doesn't fall. So, they step back further and...

All three slowly cock their heads to the left...The scarecrow  
leans slightly.

HENRY

You think it'll scare crows,  
leanin' like that?

BEANY

Pfft! Crows don't know no better.

Henry nods.

HENRY

Yeah, I s'pose.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

The boys lay Mrs. Lewis' tools against the side of the house.

HENRY

I sure hope Mrs. Lewis gets herself  
another husband soon, so I won't  
have to come over here no more.

PEWT

She oughta hang out a sign like Sam  
Stuart does when he wants to get  
hisself another horse.

They laugh, then Beany smiles mischievously.

BEANY

Hey. Watch this.

He goes to the front gate, takes the "EGGS FOR SALE" sign  
from the fence, and pulls a little stub of pencil out of his  
pocket.

BEANY

(to Henry)

Bend over.

Henry does and Beany uses his back as a desk to write  
something on the backside of the sign. Pewt looks over his  
shoulder and smiles. Beany finishes and hangs the sign around  
the scarecrow's neck.

BEANY

There. That oughta work.

Henry looks at the sign and laughs.

It reads: **MAN WANTED.**

INT. MRS. LEWIS' HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Mrs. Lewis glances up from her sewing and watches through the  
window as the boys leave her yard, laughing. She smiles and  
returns to her sewing.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - MORNING

The church bell rings in the distance. People walk by on  
their way to church. A few point at the scarecrow and chuckle  
as they pass. Others stop and a small crowd gathers outside  
the fence.

Beany, Pewt and Henry run up, excited to see the crowd in  
front of Mrs. Lewis'.

A MAN reads the sign and laughs. His WIFE gives him a reprimanding swat on the arm.

LAUGHING MAN  
Well it's funny.

WIFE  
That's not funny at all.

The boys smile at each other, happy with the effect they've created.

The frowning Wife turns to the boys and they stop smiling.

An ELDERLY COUPLE stop to see what is happening. The Laughing Man points out the sign to them. The ELDERLY MAN squints but can't read it. The ELDERLY WOMAN can, and gasps.

ELDERLY WOMAN  
Oh! For shame.

ELDERLY MAN  
What's it say?

She turns around to see who she might complain to about this and focuses on the Laughing Man.

He stops laughing.

She grabs her husband's coat sleeve and pulls him away as he's still trying to read the sign.

ELDERLY MAN  
What'd it say?

ON THE FRONT PORCH

Mrs. Lewis steps out her door, tying on her bonnet, and is puzzled by the small crowd in front of her house.

MRS. LEWIS  
Well, I'll be.

As she approaches the garden, Beany and Pewt slink back and the crowd becomes quiet.

She comes around the scarecrow, sees the sign and stops cold.

She turns to the crowd, humiliated and hurt.

They wither and start to walk away.

She marches to the scarecrow, yanks down the sign and rips it apart. Tears fill her eyes.

Beany and Pewt are horrified and run off...but Henry is pinned motionless by what he has caused.

Unable to tear the pieces any smaller, Mrs. Lewis throws the shreds to the ground and looks into the crowd...right at Henry!

Her tears and wounded pride pierce him.

She turns away and hurries into her house as the tears begin to flow.

Henry runs away as fast as he can.

INT. MRS. LEWIS' HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Lewis sits primly on the sofa with her hands in her lap. She looks deliberately out the window...not at her visitors.

Seated in chairs around the room are Father, Mr. Watson and Mr. Purington.

Henry, Beany and Pewt stand in the center of the room with their heads down.

MR. WATSON

Mrs. Lewis. I want to offer you my deepest apologies. What these boys have done is unforgiveable. And they will be severely punished. I promise you that.

FATHER

Yes, ma'am.

MR. PURINGTON

Yes, severely.

Mrs. Lewis continues to look out the window.

MRS. LEWIS

I should have them arrested.

FATHER

Oh, yes, ma'am. If that's what you want, I'll take them down to the jailhouse myself, right now, and lock 'em up for good.

He looks at the other fathers and they nod their agreement.

The boys' eyes go wide and they try to glance at one another without lifting their heads.

Mrs. Lewis stares out the window for a long, silent moment, then takes a deep breath and slowly exhales.

MRS. LEWIS

No...Mr. Shute. That won't be necessary. They're not criminals. Just...boys. I never had any myself  
(she looks directly at  
Father)  
but I've known a few.

Father looks at the floor.

MRS. LEWIS

No, a night in jail would just be an adventure for them. They need to be disciplined and they need to atone for their misdeed.

MR. WATSON

I couldn't agree with you more, Mrs. Lewis.

MR. PURINGTON

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. LEWIS

I have a cord of wood in my backyard that needs splitting and stacking. If you were to discipline your sons the way God disciplines his...

The boys glance at each other, a bit concerned and confused on this point.

MRS. LEWIS

...and make them split and stack that cord of wood, then I will say no more about it.

MR. WATSON

Mrs. Lewis, your terms are more than generous.

MR. PURINGTON

Yes, ma'am. Very generous.

Father nods, then shifts his eyes back to the floor.

MRS. LEWIS

They will need to bring their own saws and axes. I believe Mr. Lew-...I believe mine has been misplaced.



MR. WATSON

Yes, ma'am. We'll make sure they do.

EXT. HENRY'S STREET - NIGHT

Lamps are lit in three of the houses: Henry's house, Beany's house, and Pewt's house.

The sound of a switch slapping hide followed by a sharp squeal and cry can be heard coming...first from one house...then the second...then the third...until all three are going at once.

HENRY (V.O.)

I don't know how God punishes his son but we got licked.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - MORNING

HENRY (V.O.)

But that wasn't the end of it for me.

Johnny Heald, sporting a new black eye and an angry expression, throws open the front gate and strides up to the front door.

INT. PARLOR - MORNING

Henry sits in a chair, looking guilty, pale and more than a little sick.

Father and Johnny stand on either side of him, talking over his head. Johnny heatedly complains while Father tries to calm him down. We don't hear them...but Henry fills us in.

HENRY (V.O.)

Johnny come over to complain about the way me and Beany passed out his invitations. The students had a awful time at the dance.

INT. SCHOOL DANCE HALL - THE NIGHT BEFORE

An angry melee is in progress at the front door.

We recognize some of the girls that probably shouldn't have gotten invitations. They are being barred from entering and some are crying.

The Boys escorting girls who should have gotten invitations but didn't, shout angrily.

Johnny and Elizabeth try to manage it, but before long Elizabeth breaks down in tears and runs off.

One of the boys takes a swing at Johnny and they both go down swinging.

HENRY (V.O.)

The girls that didn't get no invitations was mad...and the boys that wanted them to go to the dance was mad...and them girls that got invitations but wasn't supposed to, showed up and the students wouldn't let them in...and they got mad...and then there was a fight...and Johnny got punched right in the eye...

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

Henry looks sicker than ever.

HENRY (V.O.)

...So now everybody is mad with me.

Johnny continues to complain to Father as Henry's eyes roll up and he slowly wilts out of his chair onto the floor.

Father and Johnny abruptly stop talking and look down at him.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - DAY

Darkness all around -- then Mother's voice softly calls.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Henry? Henry?

FADE UP FROM BLACK

To a blurry, feverish view of Mother's concerned face.

MOTHER

Henry?

Henry lies in bed, a damp cloth across his forehead. He's sweating and tossing and mumbling feverishly and incoherently about scarecrows, gaslights and the Head sisters among other things.

Mother glances at Father. He shrugs.

HENRY (V.O.)  
I don't know what it was that made  
me sick...

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mother sits by Henry's bed. He sweats, tosses and mumbles.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...but I had a fever for three  
whole days.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - DAY

DR. PERRY, a rotund, seen-it-all, cured-it-all country doctor looks down Henry's throat. He frowns. Henry looks worried and glances at Mother.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Doctor Perry even came in once to  
look at me.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - DAY

Mother pokes her head into the room to check on Henry...he sleeps uneasily.

HENRY (V.O.)  
I started to wonder if I would ever  
get well.

She watches a moment longer then quietly closes the door.

Henry stirs, opens his eyes and stares at the ceiling, hovering between consciousness and unconsciousness. From outside we hear...

BEANY (O.S.)  
Howdy, Pewt!

PEWT (O.S.)  
Well hey, Beany!

BEANY (O.S.)  
Say, did you hear about Henry?

PEWT (O.S.)  
Why, no. What's the news?

BEANY (O.S.)  
Well, I hear he's gonna die.

Henry is suddenly fully awake and listening!

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - DAY

Beany and Pewt stand at the front gate conversing loudly for Henry's benefit.

PEWT  
You don't say?

BEANY  
Sure enough. I heard he swallowed a peach stone.

PEWT  
Well, I heard it was his liver.

Aunt Sarah comes onto the front porch, shaking a dish towel at them.

AUNT SARAH  
You boys hush up and get away from here. Go on!

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - DAY

Henry listens to the boys' voices trailing off.

BEANY (O.S.)  
See ya at the funeral!

PEWT (O.S.)  
Yup! See ya there!

HENRY (V.O.)  
Funeral? I hadn't thought about dyin'!

Henry sits up, truly distraught.

HENRY  
Mother! Mother! Mother!

Mother comes into the room and Henry starts to cry.

MOTHER  
What is it?

HENRY  
(crying)  
I don't want to die!

She takes him in her arms.

MOTHER  
(soothing)  
Henry.

HENRY  
I didn't mean to break that  
gaslight! I don't want to die! I'll  
be good! I promise!

MOTHER  
Oh, Henry. Henry. Sweet-heart.  
You're not going to die! C'mon now.  
Dr. Perry said you'll be out of bed  
by tomorrow.

Henry stops crying.

HENRY  
He did?

MOTHER  
Yes. Now just calm down. Those boys  
we're just teasing you.

She holds him close and he exhales a ragged sigh and rests in  
her arms.

MOTHER  
Now what's this about a gaslight?

Henry's eyes pop open. Uh, oh...but there's no way out now.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Henry devours a giant breakfast with ravenous speed.

HENRY (V.O.)  
Well, Dr. Perry was right. I am all  
better today...

EXT. JOHNNY HEALD'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry and Father stand on the front porch with Johnny. His  
eye is still swollen and discolored.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...And after breakfast, I had to  
give Johnny his dollar back.

Johnny scowls, takes the dollar and shuts the door.

HENRY (V.O.)  
He was still pretty sore about  
it...

INT. GAS MAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Henry counts coins out of his box into the Gas Man's hand.  
Father stands behind him, watching.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...And then I went down to pay the  
gas man for the gaslight I broke.  
It cost me one-dollar and fifty-  
cents! And I didn't even have that  
much...

He cleans out the last penny from his treasure box and gives  
it to the gas man, then glances up at Father.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...I had to borrow fifty-six cents  
from Father...

Father hands him the coins and he hands them to the Gas Man.

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Henry and Father stand at the window of the music shop.

HENRY (V.O.)  
...On the way home, Father let me  
stop to look at my cornet.  
(he sighs)  
I 'spose I shall never get it now.

He walks away.

Father stands, watching Henry walk away, then notices Mr.  
Gorham looking at *him* through the window.

Mr. Gorham raises his eyebrows with a surly, "so are you  
gonna buy something" expression.

Father steps back from the window and follows after Henry.

Mr. Gorham cranes his neck to keep an eye on them both until  
they are out of sight.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' HOUSE - DAY

Father walks Henry to the front gate. They are both nervous.  
Henry carries an axe, a saw and a small bag of other tools.

Father pushes open the gate...and it falls off the hinge again. He glances at Mrs. Lewis.

She stands like a stone on the front porch.

Father gives Henry a shove to go on and Henry slowly walks to the bottom of the steps with his head down. Mrs. Lewis looks down from the porch at him.

Father re-hangs the gate then quickly scuttles off.

Henry watches him leave then turns to face Mrs. Lewis alone.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

The boys are sawing and chopping. Mrs. Lewis sits in her rocker, watching impassively, fanning herself with a paper fan. Beany glances up at her.

BEANY

Is she just gonna sit there  
watchin' us like that all day?

HENRY

I s'pose she has a right to if she  
wants to.

BEANY

Maybe so. But it sure spooks me.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Henry, Beany and Pewt pack up their tools and walk toward the back gate. Mrs. Lewis watches them from her rocker, stony and unmoving.

The gate closes behind them and she silently stands up and goes inside.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Henry comes in the front door, tired and dirty. Keene shushes him, and waves him over. They peek around the corner into the parlor.

Father silently rehearses his speech, pantomiming with grand gestures and noble stances.

The kids snicker.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - MORNING

The boys enter the yard and look at the back porch. The rocking chair is empty.

They start to work but keep glancing at the porch waiting for Mrs. Lewis to show up.

BEANY

Where is she?

Henry shrugs and continues chopping.

INT. MRS. LEWIS' HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Lewis pulls the curtain aside and watches the boys work for a few moments, then lets the curtain fall shut.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

The whole Shute family is seated around the room. The kids are in their night shirts. Father stands at one end, striking a formal, hand-on-breast orator's pose.

HENRY (V.O.)

Father has been working hard on his speech and tonight he let us stay up to hear him say it.

Father clears his throat and holds his arms out for silence. He holds his notes and refers to them often.

FATHER

Mr. Moderator, it is with the greatest pride and the deepest humility that I have accepted your charge to address this august assembly. I am but a humble office holder under this glorious government, and yet I am moved to answer my country's call, and to be of such service as my humble station may render.

He pauses to consult his notes.

HENRY

Is that all of it?

The family giggles.

FATHER

No that's not all of it. Now hush up or you can go to bed.



He regains his stance and clears his throat.

FATHER

Were it not that a cruel accident in my early youth, in my far away boyhood days, prevented me from volunteering and dedicating my life to my country's welfare in the struggle just ended, I would have poured out every drop of my blood to have maintained her honor and the honor of her flag.

Mother laughs out loud.

MOTHER

Oh, George. How can you tell such dreadful lies? You know you were almost scared to death that you would be drafted.

FATHER

Well that's got nothin' to do with it. There are plenty of old fellas traveling 'round the country talking thataway who couldn't have been drug into the war with an ox chain. -- Now may I finish my speech, or do you want me to send you to bed?

Mother swishes a hand at him.

FATHER

Fine.

He resumes his stance and continues.

FATHER

It is peculiarly appropriate that Exeter, the birth place of Lewis Case, the educator of Webster...

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW

Father continues his speech. Even from out here, he can still be heard quite loudly.

FATHER

...the home of Amos Tuck, of General Marston, should be foremost in the party strife.

(MORE)

FATHER (cont'd)  
 And, as for me, I work only for my  
 party's good...

HENRY (V.O.)  
 He went on like that for a long  
 time. Some of it you could hear  
 about a mile, he hollered so.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

The boys saw wood.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 Bright and fair. Sawed more wood  
 today...

EXT. BOOT SHOP - DAY

Henry comes out of the shop carrying a large pair of shiny  
 new boots.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 ...And later, I picked up some new  
 boots that Father got for his  
 speech...

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Henry, carrying Father's boots, slows down as he passes the  
 shop window but doesn't stop. He merely glances at the cornet  
 as he passes and smiles.

HENRY (V.O.)  
 ...and I checked on my cornet. It's  
 still there.

Mr. Gorham watches him pass.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

The family is assembled to hear Father's speech again. He is  
 wearing his suit and new boots and failing miserably at  
 reciting his speech from memory.

It's painful for everyone to watch.

FATHER  
 Were it not that a cruel accident  
 in my far away...in my...  
 (he checks his notes)  
 ...In my early youth, in my boyhood  
 days, prevented me from...uh  
 (MORE)

FATHER (cont'd)  
 (he checks his notes)  
 ...uh...volunteering...

Aunt Sarah puts her hand to her lips and leans close to Henry.

AUNT SARAH  
 (whispers)  
 Lord 'o mercy, I hope he don't  
 break down at the rally.

Henry nods and watches Father check his notes again.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

Beany splits logs, Henry saws, and Pewt rests on the log pile. Henry saws through his log.

HENRY  
 Your turn.

He and Pewt trade places. Henry wipes the sweat from his face and glances toward the back porch where

Mrs. Lewis sweeps vigorously, then stops to catch her breath, reaching out for the porch post to steady herself. She fans herself and takes a few deep breaths.

Henry watches her and, for the first time, notices...

Her lined face, graying hair and faded dress. She looks tired, strained.

She notices Henry looking at her...straightens up proudly...sweeps a few more strokes then goes inside.

Henry thoughtfully watches the door shut behind her.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The Shute family walks out of the church with the rest of the congregation. A MAN puts a hand on Father's shoulder.

MAN AT CHURCH  
 George. Congratulations on your  
 speech. I can't wait to hear it.

FATHER  
 (embarrassed)  
 Oh. Well, thank you.

ANOTHER MAN waves.

ANOTHER MAN

Yeah, George. We're looking forward to it.

Father politely nods and waves and wishes he were invisible.

Jim claps him on the back.

JIM

See. You're gonna do great.

Henry is excited to see all of the attention Father is getting...But Mother notices his nervousness.

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

The house is dark. Flickering candlelight and soft murmurs come from the parlor.

Henry tiptoes down the stairs to where he can just see into the parlor, sits on a step and watches...

Father pacing, struggling to memorize his speech.

FATHER

...that prevented me from...  
volunteering...in...the struggle  
just ended...I would have...poured  
out every drop of my blood...for  
her honor.

He checks his notes.

FATHER

Dang it! To have maintained her  
honor and the honor of her flag.

He sighs deeply and stares at the wall with a worried expression.

Mother comes to the doorway and quietly watches him.

When he notices her, he puts on a brave smile.

FATHER

Oh, hey. Just...getting this darn  
speech learned.

She smiles sympathetically.

MOTHER

Are you coming to bed soon?

FATHER  
In a little while.

She nods and turns to leave, then stops. Henry leans forward.

MOTHER  
George...if you didn't want to do  
this speech, why did you let  
yourself get roped into it?

FATHER  
(passing it off like no  
big deal)  
Aw, now...It's not like that. I  
didn't get roped into anything. I  
just...

He stops...drops the pretense...and sighs heavily.

FATHER  
You're right. I don't want to do  
it. I never did.  
(he laughs nervously)  
Truth is, I'm scared near half-to-  
death. I just don't know how to get  
out of it.  
(he takes a deep breath)  
And now...well...now Jim and the  
fellas are dependin' on me  
and...well...I figure it's as good  
a time as any to finally stand up  
and get counted.  
(he laughs softly)  
It's not like anybody's gonna be  
shootin' bullets at me.

She understands...smiles...and kisses his cheek.

MOTHER  
Okay. Try not to stay up too late.

Father nods.

Mother turns to the stairs...and Henry quietly slips back to  
his room.

As Mother climbs the stairs, Father can be heard in the  
parlor below, quietly rehearsing his speech.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Henry, Beany and Pewt are finishing up for the day. They take  
their tools and head for the back gate.

Mrs. Lewis watches them from her kitchen window, and then turns back to her ironing.

As the boys pass by the chicken coop, Henry notices that the top hinge on the door is loose and stops to fix it. Beany and Pewt wave to him and continue on.

Mrs. Lewis glances up and is surprised to see Henry fixing the door.

He gives the door a test-jiggle, then picks up his tool bag and walks out the back gate.

Mrs. Lewis, unsure how to react, simply watches him leave.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - DAY

Henry, Beany and Pewt sit on logs, eating sandwiches around an overturned crate that they use as a table.

Mrs. Lewis comes out of the house, carrying a tray with a pitcher of sweetwater and three glasses.

The boys see her coming and stop in mid-chew.

With an aloof expression, she sets the tray down on their makeshift table.

MRS. LEWIS

Put the tray on the porch when  
you're done.

And walks back to the house.

The boys watch her walk away, and then pounce on the pitcher.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

The boys pack up to head home. Henry carries the tray with the pitcher and glasses to the back porch and carefully sets it down. Mrs. Lewis steps onto the porch and Henry looks up.

There is a brief moment of awkward silence between them.

HENRY

Thank you for the sweetwater,  
Ma'am.

MRS. LEWIS

(stiffly)  
You're welcome.

Henry nods and starts to leave, then stops.

HENRY

Mrs. Lewis.  
 (he glances back at Beany  
 and Pewt)  
 We're sorry about the scarecrow.

Mrs. Lewis' doesn't respond for a long moment, and then...

MRS. LEWIS

Thank you, Henry. I accept your  
 apology.

Henry nods and joins Beany and Pewt. They each nod to her  
 before walking out the gate.

The tiniest smile softens her lips.

INT. PARLOR - EVENING

The whole family is gathered in the parlor to hear Father's  
 speech again. He is relaxed and confident. Aunt Sarah is  
 anxious.

HENRY (V.O.)

Tonight, Father got all dressed up.  
 And he wasn't hollerin' or angry.  
 He says he has got his speech  
 learnt.

FATHER

Mr. Moderator, it is with the  
 greatest pride and the deepest  
 humility that I have accepted your  
 charge to address this august  
 assembly. I am but a humble office  
 holder under this glorious  
 government, and yet I am...uh...

HENRY (V.O.)

He begun real good, then forgot  
 some.

Father sneaks a quick glance at his shirt cuff.

The cuff is covered with scribbled notes of his speech.

HENRY (V.O.)

But he has writ some of the hard  
 parts on his cuffs so then he went  
 on just fine.

FATHER

...I am moved to answer my country's call, and to be of such service as my humble station may render...

LATER

FATHER

...And, so my friends and fellow countrymen, it is with great pride that I cast my vote for the next President of the United States, General Ulysses S. Grant!

The family applauds.

Henry glances at Aunt Sarah who has her hand to her mouth, shaking her head with uncertainty.

HENRY (V.O.)

Aunt Sarah is still afraid he is gonna break down.

INT. MRS. LEWIS' HOUSE - DAY

Henry, Beany and Pewt are seated around Mrs. Lewis' kitchen table, drinking sweetwater and laughing. Mrs. Lewis brings a plate of donuts to the table and sits down with them.

HENRY (V.O.)

We finished sawin' that wood for Mrs. Lewis today and she asked us in and gave us some bully donuts and sweetwater. And she told us stories about what her brothers used to do when they was boys. I didn't even know she had brothers.

EXT. MRS. LEWIS' HOUSE - DAY

The boys and Mrs. Lewis come out of the house onto the front porch.

BEANY

Thank you again for the doughnuts.

PEWT

Yes, ma'am. They were real good.

HENRY

And the sweetwater, too.



MRS. LEWIS  
 You're welcome, boys. Thank you for  
 chopping my wood.

Father arrives to pick up Henry and stands awkwardly outside  
 the gate, uncomfortable about coming in. Mrs. Lewis notices  
 him.

MRS. LEWIS  
 Mr. Shute. Come in.

FATHER  
 Oh, that's alright. I just stopped  
 by to get Henry on my way home. I  
 don't want to trouble you.

MRS. LEWIS  
 It's no trouble, Mr. Shute. Please,  
 come in.

Father nods, still reluctant.

Beany and Pewt head for the front gate, carrying their tools.

BEANY  
 Bye Mrs. Lewis.

PEWT  
 See ya Henry.

MRS. LEWIS  
 Goodbye boys.

HENRY  
 Oh, I almost forgot my tools.

He runs around the side of the house to the backyard.

Father pushes the gate open and it practically falls apart in  
 his hands. Pewt and Beany walk out as he tries to fix it.

The gate is just too far gone, so Father leans it against the  
 fence and walks to the porch where he stands uncomfortably at  
 the bottom step, avoiding Mrs. Lewis.

FATHER  
 Well, I...I hope Henry did a good  
 job for you and wasn't too much  
 trouble.

Mrs. Lewis comes down the steps to stand next to Father.

MRS. LEWIS  
 He was no trouble at all, Mr.  
 Shute. He's a fine, fine boy.

Father looks at her, surprised to hear her say this.

FATHER  
What? Oh...Well...yes, ma'am...

Henry jogs around the corner of the house smiling and carrying his tools. Father watches him and quietly smiles.

FATHER  
...I guess he is at that.

Mrs. Lewis looks at Father and smiles.

MRS. LEWIS  
And so are you, George Shute.

Father turns to her...really surprised to hear her say that!  
She smiles warmly.

MRS. LEWIS  
Most of the time.

Father looks away, embarrassed.

HENRY  
Got my tools.

FATHER  
Good. Good. Well...I guess we oughta be gettin' along then.  
Mother'll have dinner for us soon.  
(he nods)  
Mrs. Lewis.

MRS. LEWIS  
Mr. Shute.

Father and Henry walk out the front gate, and then Father stops and turns to Mrs. Lewis.

FATHER  
Uh...Mrs. Lewis. If...uh...If it's alright with you, I'll stop by on Sunday and see if I can't do something about that gate.

MRS. LEWIS  
That'll be just fine, Mr. Shute,  
Thank you.

Father nods and smiles like an embarrassed kid. Henry waves and they start up the road.

As they walk away, Henry excitedly tells Father about his day, the doughnuts, the sweetwater, the stories.

Father listens and smiles...and slides his arm around Henry's shoulders.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - MORNING

Henry is in bed fast asleep. Beyond him, through the open window, we see the front yard.

We hear the front door open then close. Footsteps hurry across the porch, down the steps and...

Father appears, hustling across the yard. He glances up at Henry's window with a mischievous smile, and then hurries out the gate.

EXT. GORHAM'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Henry happily trots down Main Street, dodging wagons, buggies, and pedestrians.

HENRY (V.O.)

I didn't have to saw wood today, so  
I went down to look at my cornet.

He stops in front of Gorham's window and looks inside.

The cornet is gone!

Frantically, he searches the window display and then looks deeper into the store. Mr. Gorham looks up from the violin he's polishing and their eyes meet.

Mr. Gorham sees the wounded look...and just returns to his work.

Henry hangs his head and walks away.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry, Keene, Cele and Aunt Sarah are dressed up and waiting by the front door to leave for the rally. Mother holds Frankie. Henry stands quietly to the side, still glum about his cornet.

Father, disheveled and sweating nervously, stomps from room to room.

FATHER

Where's my damn speech!

Mother stops him in the entry way.

MOTHER

Don't curse. It's right here.

She pulls the speech out of his side coat pocket and hands it to him. He snatches it from her and slams it down on the hallway table.

FATHER

Why's it so damn hot in here. I feel like I'm on fire.

He checks his reflection in the hallway mirror.

FATHER

Maybe I'm comin' down with something.

MOTHER

You're not coming down with anything. But you're gonna be late, if you don't leave soon.

FATHER

No. I think I'm coming down with something.

He unbuttons his coat and loosens his tie. Aunt Sarah anxiously watches him unravel.

FATHER

Maybe I shouldn't go tonight.

Now Henry looks up.

MOTHER

George.

FATHER

No. I mean it! I don't feel well at all. You're just gonna have to send a note. Tell Jim I...tell him I can't do it.

He glances at Henry. Their eyes meet...and Father looks away...angry and ashamed.

FATHER

I gotta lie down.

He goes upstairs to his bedroom and shuts the door.

Mother and Aunt Sarah exchange anxious glances. Henry sits on the bottom step and hangs his head.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Henry sits alone at the bottom of the stairs, his chin in his hands. Father's door opens and he looks up.

Aunt Sarah pokes her head around the corner and Mother and the girls come in from an adjoining room.

Father slowly comes down the stairs. His tie is tied, his jacket buttoned, but he's still nervous as hell. He stops and looks directly at Henry.

FATHER

Alright. Let's go.

Henry smiles.

Aunt Sarah puts her hand to her mouth and closes her eyes.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

The hall is set up with rows of chairs facing the stage, with a center aisle running up the middle. The crowd, mostly men, is rowdy and noisy. The band on stage plays a rousing tune.

Old Keys, the policeman, stands on the floor in front of the stage, trying to maintain order. A hat flies across the room, followed by laughter.

Aunt Sarah, Keene, Cele and Henry make their way to some empty seats a few rows from the front. The crowd whistles, shouts, and stamps their feet.

The music stops and Old Keys shouts over the din.

OLD KEYS

Alright now! Quiet down! Quiet down! That's enough of that whistlin' and stampin'. You gotta quiet down now!

HECKLER

Ah, sit down!

The crowd laughs.

Old Keys scans the room for the culprit.

Two more policeman line up at the back of the hall.

OLD KEYS

Alright, now. The next one that makes a peep is gonna get thrown out! So, no more whistlin'!

At that moment, Jim Melcher steps onto the stage behind Old Keys and a loud whistle and cheer goes up.

Old Keys is instantly angry, then realizes that Jim is behind him. He gives the crowd a steely look anyway.

JIM

Gentlemen! Good evening. I'm glad to see you all here tonight. We have a very special evening planned. So, now, without further delay, I present to you our honored speakers.

The band starts up "Hail to the Chief" and the speakers file onto the stage.

General Marston, in full uniform, enters first, followed by Tom Newsome, and two more STATELY MEN in uniform. Father brings up the rear, nervous, sweating and pale.

Henry stands on his chair for a better view. Spots Father and points.

HENRY

There he is.

Keene and Cele squeal and clap their hands.

Old Keys sees Henry standing on his chair and stares him down.

Jim goes to the lectern and puts his hands up for quiet. The crowd settles down.

JIM

Our first speaker this evening is a new party member, a man you all know and love, and a good friend of mine. Please welcome, Mr. George Shute.

He motions to Father and the crowd applauds.

Father doesn't move. He just stares at the crowd until the man next to him touches his elbow and motions toward the lectern. Father stands up and shakily walks forward.

He shakes Jim's hand and grips the lectern to steady himself. He unconsciously feels his side coat pocket for his speech. It's not there. Staring out at the audience and trying to remain calm, he quickly checks his other pockets. Nothing.

JIM  
 (a discreet whisper)  
 Go ahead, George.

He smiles nervously and struggles to remember how to start.

FATHER  
 (too quiet)  
 Thank you...M-M-Mr. Moderator...

Shouts of "Louder!" come from the audience. Father looks up at the crowd, swallows hard and starts again, louder this time.

FATHER  
 (nervous and halting)  
 Thank you, Jim....I mean, Mr. Moderator.

A few chuckles in the crowd.

FATHER  
 Mr. Moderator, it is with the greatest pride and the deepest humility that...  
 (he checks his cuff)  
 ...that I have accepted your charge to address this...  
 (checks his cuff)  
 ...this august assembly. I am but a humble office holder under this glorious government, and yet I am moved to...to answer...to answer my country's call, and to...to be of such service as my...as my humble station may render.

Jim is surprised at Father's nervousness but smiles to keep up a good front and leads a burst of applause.

FATHER  
 (nods to the applause and continues)  
 It is....peculiarly appropriate that Exeter...

He squints at his cuff.

FATHER  
 ...the birth place of Lewis Case, the home of Amos...Tuck, and of our own...

He gestures stiffly toward General Marston.

FATHER

...General Marston should be  
foremost...uh...foremost in the  
party strife.

Father stops to check his cuff but...

The ink is smudged by his sweat.

Jim watches with growing uneasiness.

General Marston starts a slow boil as the other speakers  
glance at each other uncomfortably.

Aunt Sarah can't watch and closes her eyes.

Father clears his throat and reluctantly presses on.

FATHER

As...as for me, I work...only  
work...only for my...for my party's  
good, for my...my country's good.

He checks his cuff, and sighs audibly.

FATHER

Were it not for a cruel  
accident...in...in...in my early  
youth...

The audience leans forward, listening closely, trying to  
follow the thread of his halting speech.

Henry watches with a pained expression.

FATHER

...that...um...that prevented me  
from...from...that prevented me...

He's lost it.

He checks his cuff but it's unreadable. Sweat drips down the  
side of his face. The room is silent. Father is silent.

Henry leans forward in his chair and mouths the next word.

HENRY

Volunteering.

Jim glances at the other speakers and considers stepping in  
but a shout comes out of the crowd.

MAN IN THE CROWD

Go on, George!



There's laughter and someone whistles. Old Keys jerks up like dog on point.

Father smiles nervously and checks his cuff again. Still nothing. Panic. Father faces the audience. Completely blank.

Henry stands up, cups his hands around his mouth and whispers loudly.

HENRY  
Volunteering!

Father sees him but doesn't get it right away, then...

ANOTHER HECKLER  
Speak up, George! I can't hear ya!

More laughter and someone whistles.

Old Keys spins around to see Henry standing up, his hands cupped around his mouth.

In a heartbeat, he crosses the room, grabs Henry by the collar and drags him into the aisle.

OLD KEYS  
I warned you!

Aunt Sarah jumps up and tries to snatch Henry back.

AUNT SARAH  
Let go of him!

OLD KEYS  
He whistled! So, I'm tossin' him out!

AUNT SARAH  
Why you big bully! You know very well that wasn't him.

He waves her off and drags Henry down the center aisle. Aunt Sarah digs in and tries to pull Henry back.

Father emerges from his frozen daze and notices Old Keys dragging Henry away.

FATHER  
Hey...Hey!

He jumps down from the stage, runs up behind Old Keys and spins him around.

FATHER  
Now just hold on there!

Old Keys lets go of Henry and steps nose to nose with Father.

Some men step in to separate them. The other policeman grab Father and a rough scuffle erupts.

On stage, Jim Melcher calls for order.

JIM  
Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Please!

But no one listens. The show is now Father and the Policemen and, like a gang of schoolyard boys, a crowd presses eagerly around them to watch the fight.

Aunt Sarah, seeing where this is headed, turns around and makes her way back through the crowd to Keene and Cele, who stand on their chairs watching excitedly.

Taking each by the hand she leads them down the side aisle of the hall and out the front door. The girls take a quick last look before the door closes.

ON STAGE

Jim gives up trying to restore order and slumps into his chair.

A few chairs away, General Marston sits like a boulder, silently staring straight ahead. He turns to Jim, doesn't say a word, and turns away again.

Jim sighs helplessly.

Back on the floor, Father now has himself between Henry and the line of Policemen. He zeros in on one of the them, SAMUEL, a big, boyish, red-head about his age.

FATHER  
Samuel, I could lick you when we  
were boys and I can lick you now!  
Just see if I can't!

Samuel glances uncertainly at his fellow policeman and doesn't move.

OLD KEYS  
Don't let 'em bluff you lads! We  
can take him.

Father shoves up his sleeves.

FATHER  
Well, you better bring your mommas  
to help you do it!

Old Keys scowls grimly.

## OLD KEYS

CHARGE!

The policemen rush Father all at once and he goes down swinging.

As the crowd presses in around them, Minister Gilkey peers in at Father over the policemen's shoulders and shakes his head disapprovingly.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Henry and Father are walking home. Father looks pretty tossed around, hair mussed, tie askew, vest undone. He looks straight ahead, running over the night's events in his mind, shaking his head and muttering occasional curses.

Henry glances up at him a few times before speaking.

HENRY

You think Mother's gonna be mad about us fightin'?

FATHER

Yup.

Henry nods. He thinks so, too.

HENRY

Are you...are you gonna lick me when we get home?

FATHER

Lick you? What would I lick you for? You didn't do nothing. It was those darn policemen. I can't believe they acted that way. They acted like it was my fault. Well, it wasn't my fault! And it wasn't your fault neither. No sir. No policeman is gonna manhandle my son when he's just trying to watch his father give a damn speech. No, sir!

Henry nods and they walk awhile in silence, except for Father's occasional muttering. After a few moments, Father turns to Henry...as if he's just remembered something.

FATHER

You know, you were a real brick to stand up like that.

(he turns back to the road)

Yes, sir. A real brick.

Henry is surprised by Father's compliment, and smiles proudly.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The windows glow with warm light. Henry and Father slowly climb the porch steps as the door opens and Mother, Keene, Cele and Aunt Sarah, carrying Frankie, come out to greet them.

Mother hugs them both and listens while Henry excitedly reenacts the fight, blow-by-blow.

With an arm around each of them, she steers them inside.

HENRY (V.O.)

Well, Mother wasn't so mad. She told Father he had no business punching policemen but she also said Old Keys shouldn'ta grabbed me thataway neither. Anyhow, I bet that's a rally nobody's gonna forget about soon!

The front door closes behind them.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Henry is fast asleep. Beyond him, through the open window, we see the front yard.

We hear the front door open, and quietly close. Footsteps move leisurely across the porch, down the steps and...

Father appears strolling across the yard carrying his lunch pail. At the gate, he stops and looks up at Henry's window.

He smiles softly. There is a peace to him that we have not seen before. He turns and strolls out the gate.

Henry rolls over and continues sleeping as

WE SLOWLY PULL BACK to find

His CORNET -- laying on the desk next to his bed.

A NOTE propped against it reads: "You earned it."

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

We're on a road at the edge of town, only a few houses and open fields.

Birds sing. Insects hum. Bees buzz...and then...the sound of a distant, tuneless cornet wafts closer...growing louder...LOUDER...and...

Henry marches out into the road from behind a house, honking exuberantly on his cornet! Behind him is a procession of marching boys. He leads them up the hill toward us, smiling and playing.

HENRY (V.O.)

August 24th. Bright and fair. I got my cornet today. It's a dandy! I know Father wanted me to keep this diary for a whole year but I don't think there will ever be a better day than today. So, I ain't gonna write no more.

Henry, Beany, Pewt, Skinny, Pozzy, Whacker, and all the rest march past us. We turn as the last boy passes and watch them march away into the distance...getting smaller...and smaller...until they disappear over the hill.

FADE OUT.