

RESURRECTION CAFÉ

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I ain't lookin' to fight with you,  
Frighten you, or uptighten you,  
Drag you down or drain you down,  
Chain you down or bring you down.  
All I really wanna do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.

—Bob Dylan

OPEN ON

EXT. CORNFIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

The wind WHISTLES through giant stalks.

In a clearing near the road, a group of men gathers in a circle around something on the ground. Most are farmers, two are police officers in uniform.

Crude weapons—axes, sickles, spades, hoes—dangle from their hands, tinged with something black and sticky. The men are covered with sweat and grime.

Period clothing, close haircuts, and a shiny new '54 Pontiac sedan date the scene to somewhere in the mid-1950's.

FARMER 1

Jesus. Oh Jesus.

FARMER 2

Is he dead yet?

FARMER 3

I sure as shit don't know how he couldn't be. I think we all got a piece of 'im.

FARMER 1

Oh Jesus.

FARMER 3

But then again, I figured after the legs went...that would pretty much slow 'im down...

FARMER 2

Those eyes. God. I feel like he's still lookin' at us. Judging us.

FARMER 4

After what he did? To that innocent young girl?

ZEKE, the youngest farmhand of the bunch, spits loudly.

ZEKE

She wasn't that damn innocent.

Farmer 4 strikes Zeke in the jaw with a swift forearm and knocks him to the ground. He follows up with a hard kick. The other farmers try to restrain him.

TROOPER

Knock it off! Dammit!

Zeke scampers and tries to get up, but Farmer 4 gets his hands on Zeke's leg. Zeke pulls and tumbles across the grass, landing with his arms around the severed head of LAZARUS. The fighting stops.

The head seems to be staring right up at Zeke. A few other body parts are scattered on the ground nearby.

Zeke sits up quickly, sucks for air, laughs a nervous laugh, pokes at Lazarus' cheeks.

ZEKE

(hushed)

Cold. I can't figure how there in't any blood.

FARMER 4

Why don't you reach inside and poke around for some, ya fuckin' idiot?

TROOPER

Get away from him, Zeke.

ZEKE

(laughs)

Oh, gimme a break. What's he gonna do? Head-buttt me?

A couple of the other farmers chuckle nervously. Zeke reaches out and tugs on Lazarus' upper lip, making him grimace.

ZEKE

Looks pretty scary, don't he? Maybe I'll get 'im stuffed and put 'im in Dad's Hawkeye room.

FARMER 1

C'mon, Zeke. That's not funny.

ZEKE

You don't think?

He sits back and studies the head for a moment, then looks around at the group. With forced nonchalance, he takes a pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket, lights one and takes a drag.

I think it's funny as hell. Here buddy,  
have a smoke.

He puts his cigarette into Lazarus' mouth. It looks absurd, a severed head with a dangling Lucky Strike.

TROOPER  
That's enough.

ZEKE  
(to Lazarus)  
You're right. I read in Ladies Home  
Journal that it might cause cancer.

He reaches for his cigarette back.

And God knows we wouldn't wa—  
AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!

Zeke snaps upright, screaming and trying to pull away. Lazarus' decapitated head has sunk its teeth into the first two fingers of Zeke's right hand.

FARMER 1  
He's eating it! He's eating it!

Sure enough, Lazarus is working his mouth to get more and more of the fingers. A hostile look in his eyes.

TROOPER  
God dammit!

The trooper lifts his axe and runs to help.

ZEKE  
Nooooooooo!

He brings his axe down hard on Zeke's fingers. Zeke's blood spatters on his already filthy uniform. The trooper raises his axe again and swings it down toward the head. We hear a melon-splitting sound as we cut away.

Zeke looks at his hand in horror; it's missing two fingers.

FARMER 4  
(to Zeke, throwing down his  
sickle in disgust)  
Still think it's funny?

Zeke drops to the ground in a faint.

TROOPER  
Enough!

The trooper slams open the trunk of his squad car, rummages for a burlap bag. Picks up a body part or two, stuffs them into the bag, then throws the bag into the hands of his partner, JIMMY, who continues the job.

TROOPER  
That's enough. Get it in the bag and  
get it in the trunk.

FARMER 3  
Boy...that's gotta be nerves, doesn't  
it?

TROOPER  
It's gotta be kept goddamned quiet, is  
what it's gotta be! Nobody's gonna  
believe us, then they're gonna start  
asking questions we don't wanna answer.

FARMER 1  
But he was eatin' his fingers! Did you  
see it?

FARMER 3  
What kinda guy would want to do that?

TROOPER  
(exploding)  
Hey! He was some kind of freak, and now  
he's dead. Why don't you guys get  
somebody to look after the kid's hand.  
Jimmy, after you finish pickin' him up,  
go bury him, will you?

JIMMY  
Where do you want me to do that?

TROOPER  
I don't give a shit. Just get him out  
of my county. Peabody... Sheldon...  
anywhere but here.

EXT. TOWN - MONTAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

A faded roadsign reads: "Welcome to Sheldon!"

The sign has been added to, then vandalized: "Home of the Cornboilers: 2008 State Volleyball Chimps"

The CREDITS roll over a sun-drenched montage of present-day Sheldon, Pop. 1500.

An soft, middle-aged man rolls slowly across his broad lawn on a riding mower. A plump farmer sits lazily atop a giant metal machine, thrashing hay. A slow-moving tractor crawls past an abandoned café on the highway at the edge of town.

A little league game is in progress on the town's baseball field. Motionless parents sit on lawn chairs watching. The air is filled with pre-adolescent chatter.

KIDS

Hey batter batter batter, nooo batter  
batter... SWING!

A pudgy 9-year-old connects with his first pitch and sends a bullet to the shortstop. The crowd GASPS.

The shortstop manages to snag the grounder on its first hop. He rockets it toward first base, but hits the batter in mid-stride. The batter falls to the ground, holding his arm.

UMPIRE

Safe!

The injured batter gets up and charges across the field.

INJURED BATTER

YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE!

Both benches erupt. Just as the two boys reach one another, fists raised, we cut to:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

TWO HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS—ALIEN AND PREDATOR—WRESTLE TO THE DEATH on a small TV screen in the dark.

A baseball glove lies next to a "Sheldon" ballcap on the floor. Neither looks the slightest bit used.

Sitting rigid in a metal folding chair, 9-year-old JOEY watches the video in a state of uninterrupted bliss. A little chubby and pale, Joey wears his unsoiled hometown uniform carelessly untucked. He munches slowly from a bag of Cheetos. His eyes widen as the action on the screen builds.

Joey's trance is broken by MRS. STACK, the librarian, who pokes her head into the back room and flips on the light.

MRS. STACK

Joey...?

Joey turns around.

JOEY

Yeah.

MRS. STACK

I'm sorry, honey. I've got to close.

JOEY

Wait, Mrs. Stack! They're almost—

She reaches over and turns the TV off.

MRS. STACK

Predator wins. But Alien gets the last laugh. You better hurry home, it looks like rain.

Joey gives her a look, between resignation and a smile.

We hear a clap of THUNDER as we cut to:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

A sudden downpour over the little league scuffle, which has escalated to a brawl. A coach tries to pry the teams apart.

COACH

Knock it off, you guys! Shake hands!

He gets hit in the face by an awkward slap/punch.

Hey!

He goes to grab the kid who hit him, but is awkwardly tackled into the mud by the kid's fat father.

FATHER

Don't you touch my kid!

A few other fathers run clumsily into the action. None of them look fit for any sort of fight.

INT. JOEY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Joey's parents, MARIE and HANK, sit at the dinner table with Joey's ancient grandmother CLARA. They're not obese, but definitely well fed. Hank stares at a baseball game playing on the large TV that sits in the corner. We hear the low CHATTER of the announcers.

The sounds of THUNDER and RAIN are loud against the house.

MARIE

Well. I guess Joey's baseball game is over. He should be home any minute now.

CLARA

(through a mouthful of  
meatloaf)

Baseball? I've never seen that kid move a muscle in his life.

MARIE

Mom...

CLARA

You're right. I did see him move his butt muscles once. Closer to the TV.

MARIE

Oh for crying out loud.

Hank holds out his hand, still staring at the TV.

HANK

Pass the cheesy potatoes?

CLARA

(reaching for a giant roll)

Kids watch too much of it, if you ask me.

She pushes Hank's arm away, annoyed.

I read, there's a violent act on television every 11 seconds.

MARIE

Mom...

CLARA

There's so much murder in the news, I wouldn't be surprised if the weatherman came on and told us it was going to rain blood tomorrow.

Hand sticks his arm out again.

HANK

Cheesy potatoes...?

CLARA

(overlapping)

...not to mention the movies they watch on the satellite. Hardly appropriate for a five-year old.

MARIE

Joey's nine, mom.

CLARA

(bewildered)

Nine?! When did he turn nine?

Clara swats Hanks arm away. Harder this time.

MARIE

Last week. Remember? You bought him a Barney T-shirt.

CLARA

There's a perfect example. Eating a man alive while he's sitting on the toilet.

MARIE

That wasn't Barney, Mom. It was Jurassic Park.

Something on TV is agitating Hank. He starts to reach for food again, without taking his eyes off the game.

HANK

Clara. Could you—

MARIE

Anyway, I think he can tell the difference between TV and real life.

HANK

(exploding)

DAMMIT!

MARIE

Honey!

Hank gapes at the TV.

HANK

Grand freaking slam.

CLARA

(still glaring at Hank)

Boy obviously has nobody to look up to.

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

Joey stands next to a small chapel at the edge of the Sheldon cemetery, looking up at an elaborate monument of a headstone: a robed angel looking heavenward.

Joey is drenched, breathing heavily, and paralyzed with fear. He looks down a path that twists through the headstones.

He looks left, right, gathers his resolve and begins to walk.

Lightning flashes across the sky and Joey stops, startled. The THUNDER gets him moving again. The rain comes down harder.

Halfway through the graveyard, he sees movement out of the corner of his eye. Reluctantly, he stops and turns to look.

Something small is wriggling on the grass above a modest grave. Joey gets closer. Wipes the rain out of his eyes.

His expression of disbelief quickly evolves to one of horror. The small thing is a human hand, poking out through the dirt and clawing at the ground around it, trying to gain purchase. The grass next to the hand bulges up, and slowly, with difficulty, a man pushes his head up through the sod.

The man struggles to pull his whole arm out of the ground. He tries to gain leverage from a stone cross, ends up breaking an arm of it off. He pauses and glances around. His intense eyes rest on Joey. It's Lazarus, no longer chopped to pieces.

Joey snaps out of his trance and runs, not looking back.

Lazarus continues to struggle. He is frustrated, stuck, and used to this kind of shit. It's raining buckets into his face.

INT. JOEY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marie is clearing dishes in the kitchen, which opens into the dining room, where we can see Clara and Hank still sitting.

CLARA

Pickled beets are in the basement I  
said.

Hank makes a loud guttural sound in reaction to the game on TV.

MARIE

(trying to keep up)

What?

CLARA

He said what if there's a monster down  
there. He said he didn't want to get  
mutilated before he reached the third  
grade.

MARIE

(with a forced smile)

So he's got an active imagination! He's  
a normal kid, Mom.

Rain-soaked and freaking out, Joey bursts in through the front door with a BANG. He bolts the door and rushes around the room, slamming windows shut, locking them, pulling down the blinds.

Clara raises her eyebrows at Marie.

Joey whips open the refrigerator and yanks something out.

JOEY

There's a zombie in the graveyard and  
he's coming after me!

Joey runs out of the room. Another door SLAMS. Marie fires a warning glance at her mother.

MARIE

Don't say a word.

CLARA

(sweetly)

Who, me?