TOO FAT TO FLY SOUTH An Original Screenplay for an Animated Feature by Allan Amenta

Allan Amenta 403 E. Vickie Ave. Santa Maria, CA 93454 (805) 922-7010 aa34ferry@verizon.net REGISTERED WGAw No. 791929 Copyright PAu 2-547-935 FADE IN

EXT. WOODS - DAY

A gray, gusty, blustery late November day in New England. The wind whistles and howls through the trees, tearing and stripping leaves from their branches. Fallen leaves skitter along the ground, swirling around tree trunks.

In a maple tree, a group of robins huddle against the wind and soberly observe the falling leaves and study the lowering sky. Over these autumnal images, the Narrator speaks.

> NARRATOR (V. 0.) When the autumn days grew shorter and the nights longer and darker, and the dying leaves of November fluttered to their graves, the robins up north knew that the snows, and the woes, of winter lurked just around the corner. Already, there was a nip in the air, a foretaste of frosty things to come that sent chills up and down the spine of every robin from Bangor to Boston.

One of the robins takes flight. Then, slowly, gradually, others follow.

NARRATOR (V. O.) The time had come to leave the northern cities, towns, and villages for warmer climates.

More birds begin flapping into the sky trailing the others.

NARRATOR (V. O.) And so, just as their parents had done, and their grandparents, and their ancestors of long ago, the robins began leaving their chilly northern nests to gather in flocks for the long flight to warmer and cozier homes in the sunny South.

ON FAT YOUNG ROBIN BEHIND BUSH

From behind a bush a young robin peeks up at the sky forlornly. Though half concealed, he cannot hide his most prominent feature, an exceedingly large belly.

NARRATOR (V. O.) All flying South, except for one lone, shivering young robin, the one they called B. B. Robin. And for good reason.

ON TWO ROBINS IN TREE ABOVE

The male robin watches the flight of others, then signals to his mate to leave, but she shakes her head and points toward the ground.

ON B. B. ROBIN BELOW

He wobbles out of the bush, a butterball of a bird. His MOTHER swoops down from the tree and hovers over him, flapping her wings and urging him to do the same.

> MOTHER ROBIN Come, Son, it's time to leave and join the others. It's time to fly South.

B. B. Robin can hardly budge. Soon, his FATHER arrives and begins tugging him, but to no avail. B. B. flops over helplessly, then pops back up, bobbing back and forth like a round-bottomed punching bag.

Mother and Father try to lift B. B. off the ground but finally give up. Almost out of breath, they glance at the sky.

EXT. THE VAST AUTUMN SKY - DAY

A flock of robins is receding into the distance.

EXT. BELOW THE TREE - DAY

Again, B. B.'s parents try to lift him. No luck. They stare at their hapless son, then exchange looks of frustration. FATHER ROBIN It's hopeless. Let's go.

MOTHER ROBIN And leave him behind? It's going to be a hard winter. The poor thing will freeze to death.

FATHER ROBIN

Serves him right, stuffing his beak all day long, day in and day out. Just look at him. All belly and blubber. He's an embarrassment!

Mother Robin embraces her son.

MOTHER ROBIN

You don't really mean that. I'd better stay here with him.

FATHER ROBIN

Are you crazy? That young fellow has a lot to learn. Food's scarce here in winter. Maybe a few months foraging for meals will teach him a lesson he won't forget and take a little weight off him, too!

Mother Robin hugs her son and drops a few tears. Father Robin is insistent and pulls her away. He then places a paternal wing on B. B.

FATHER ROBIN

You'll find ways to survive, Son. You'll have to. Maybe the experience will be a blessing in disguise.

He gives B. B. another paternal pat, nods to his mate, and takes flight. She regards her son tearfully.

MOTHER ROBIN Goodbye, Dear. Be careful. Try to keep warm And stay away from cats. See you in the Spring. Reluctantly, she takes off to join her mate, and B. B. glumly follows her flight.

EXT. MID-AIR - DAY

In flight, Mother Robin glances back at B. B., her eyes still filled with tears.

EXT. ON THE GROUND - DAY

B. B. Robin wobbles a few feet and again looks up to watch his parents sail into the sky. Tears cloud his eyes. He squats against a tree and sighs, a sad and lonely bird indeed.

He suddenly catches sight of something and perks up. A short distance away is a half-eaten apple. He waddles toward the food. Soon, his beak is happily pecking away and gobbling it down.

> NARRATOR (V. O.) No one ever accused B. B. Robin of eating like a bird. Like a horse, maybe. But not a bird. And that was his main problem. He had the busiest beak and the biggest appetite around.

B. B. spots more food and with heavy breathing and heaving stomach, struggles over to it and digs in.

NARRATOR (V. O.) To prove it, he possessed Birdland's biggest belly. No robin anywhere had a bigger paunch. None had ever gobbled and glutted, gorged and guzzled himself into a bigger size. Nor into bigger trouble.

B. B. starts waddling through backyards seeking more food, his big stomach nearly dragging against the ground.

NARRATOR (V. O.) B. B. Robin was just too fat to fly South -- NARRATOR (V. O.) -- Or north, east, west, or anywhere else. Grounded by gluttony, he was left behind to fend and forage for himself, to survive on whatever scraps he could get his busy beak into.

EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS, B. B. STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE

- 1. Mid December, and the stranded B. B. forages for food among the trash cans.
- 2. Snow begins to fall. A shivering B. B. struggles against the cold in a backyard,
- The weather grows progressively worse, modulating from sprinkling snow to raging blizzard. Frightened and cold, B. B. wobbles around the yard seeking shelter.
- 4. Shivering and shaking, B. B. finds partial shelter beneath a snow-covered picnic table. With a quivering beak and forlorn expression, he looks out at the snow swirling relentlessly around him.

EXT. A SNOW-COVERED PICNIC TABLE - NIGHT

Still shivering, B. B. is asleep under the picnic table, dreaming.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. A BACKYARD IN FLORIDA - DAY

B. B.'s parents and friends are flapping and chirping in a sunny backyard luxuriant with flowers and plants. Some of B. B.'s friends are pulling up worms, and others are filling their beaks at a feeder hanging from a tree.

EXT. A BACK PORCH - DAY

In the sweltering heat, an elderly woman is fanning herself. She rises and begins tossing bread crumbs toward the birds, who quickly respond to her generosity.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. A SNOW-COVERED PICNIC TABLE - NIGHT

Under the picnic table, B. B. tosses and turns. He is suddenly awakened by the sound of CHURCH BELLS ringing out a CHRISTMAS CAROL.

EXT. STREET SCENE - NIGHT

As snow continues to fall, the street is crowded with Christmas shoppers. Carolers are serenading everyone by a huge tree twinkling with colorful holiday lights.

EXT. A SNOW-COVERED YARD - NIGHT

Church bells ring out another carol, and B. B. slowly emerges from under the picnic table and wobbles into the yard. Freezing and now disoriented after his pleasant dream, he wobbles unsteadily a few feet, staggers, then falls backwards into the snow.

EXT. BLIZZARD SCENE - NIGHT

Throughout the long night, snow rages unremittingly, blanketing rooftops and the surrounding landscape.

EXT. A SNOW-COVERED PICNIC TABLE - DAY

It is the next morning. A few feet from the table, B. B. lies motionless on his back, his big russet belly nearly blanketed by snow. He is unable to move, or even warble for help. Alone, frightened, half-frozen, and about half-dead, he begins hallucinating

EXT. A BACKYARD IN FLORIDA - DAY

B. B. imagines his parents and friends are beckoning to him. A few young robins are splashing merrily in a birdbath. They shout to B. B. in unison.

> YOUNG ROBINS Come on in, B.B.! The water's fine!

EXT. A SNOW-COVERED YARD - DAY

His voice barely a whisper, B. B. Robin calls for help as the snow keeps falling. We learn he speaks in rhyme.

> B. B. ROBIN Somebody help me, I'm scared and alone, frozen stiff in every bone.

NARRATOR (V. O.) And so, with visions of family and friends basking in the sunny South, the stranded, snowbound bird prays for a miracle to spare him from refrigeration, and almost certain extinction, during one of New England's most ferocious and unforgiving winters.

B. B. ROBIN Somebody help me, help me, please! Get me out of this big deep freeze!

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM OVER GARAGE - DAY

Kneeling by his bed, twelve-year-old David is also praying.

NARRATOR (V. O.) Someone else is praying, too, twelve-year-old David, who has troubles of his own.

DAVID Bless my Dad in Heaven, Lord. And if you can fix my bad leg, too, it'll be the best Christmas gift I ever got.

He hobbles to a mirror on a closet door. He stares at his right leg, rubs it, sighs, then limps to a window adorned with a Christmas wreath. He peers through the snow-flecked glass and watches the snow piling up in the backyard.

EXT. A SNOW-COVERED YARD - DAY

B. B. Robin lies motionless in the snow.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM WINDOW- DAY

David sees something in the yard. He rubs the frosted glass for a clearer view. His eyes widen.

DAVID It's a big, brown blob in the snow. I wonder what it is.

He hobbles away from the window and toward the bedroom door.

EXT. A SNOW-COVERED YARD - DAY

David limps toward the stricken robin for a closer view. He bends over and brushes snow off the nearly buried bird. Soon, he is amazed to discover the fattest, plumpest, and beefiest robin he has ever seen.

B. B. can't budge and looks frozen stiff. David scoops him out of the snow, then hobbles across the yard toward the garage with the beefy bird in his arms.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

David enters, grabs a towel off a hook, wraps it around B. B., and gazes at the bird in wonderment.

DAVID You're the fattest robin I've ever seen. And real heavy, too, a bowling ball with wings! You look half dead, too. And nearly frozen.

B. B. shivers and his beak quivers.

DAVID You're going to need some thawing out.

He cradles B. B. in his arms, hobbles over to an old crate, sets the bird down inside, and studies him closely.

DAVID You sure are one plump bird. Better watch out. DAVID (cont'd) Someone may want to roast you for Christmas dinner. Or mistake you for a basketball and start tossing you through a hoop.

B. B. is not amused.

DAVID

Shouldn't you be down South with all the other birds? You're not hurt, are you?

He examines B. B.'s wings.

DAVID

No busted wings. No broken bones. Folks all gone, too, I'll bet. Gone for the winter. All alone, huh? You'll freeze to death if you stay up here. Mom said this winter's going to be a doozy, maybe one of the worst in years.

David places his hand on B. B.'s chest.

DAVID

Feels warmer. I think
you're thawing out some.
But what'll I do with you?
I already have my dog, Max,
and Mom won't stand for
another pet around the house.
 (suddenly turning)
Speak of the Devil!

Max, David's lovable lummox of a St. Bernard lumbers in and snuggles up to David. As David pets him, Max casts a wary eye on the robin. David suddenly becomes melancholy as he reflects on his last words.

> DAVID Dad used to say that -- speak of the Devil. It was one of his favorite sayings. I miss him so much. Why did he have to die?

David tries to hold back tears. Max snuggles even closer, then barks at B. B. Robin. DAVID Stop it, Max! Can't you see the poor thing is scared to death? Trying to be friendly, Max thrusts his big head into the crate and begins licking B. B. The gesture frightens B. B., and David pulls Max away. While Max sulks, David lifts B. B. from the crate, sets him on a workbench, then speaks to Max. DAVID Look at him, Max. Isn't he the fattest robin you've ever seen. How can a small bird get so plump? David and Max are suddenly startled by an unexpected voice. B. B. ROBIN Thanks for pulling me out of the snow. I wasn't designed to be an Eskimo. Boy and dog exchange looks of surprise. Max barks. David is mesmerized. DAVID He talks, Max! (to the robin) You're not a parrot disguised as a robin,

As Max roars with laughter, B. B. stiffens with indignation and points to his beak.

are you?

B. B. ROBIN You think this looks like a parrot's big beak, just because I'm able to speak?

DAVID You're pretty touchy as well as fat, aren't you? B. B. ROBIN Since you've called attention to my weight, let me explain the cause of my corpulent state.

But please let me introduce myself first, then I'll explain why my life is so cursed.

B. B. tries to remain composed and dignified.

B. B. ROBIN I'm Steven James Robin, they call me B. B. for short. Two painful initials wise-guy birds use for sport.

B. B. stands for Butterball, Big Belly, or Beefy Bird. Names so cruel and quite absurd.

Fascinated, David moves closer to B. B.

DAVID Which one should I call you?

B. B. ROBIN

Butterball, Big Belly, Beefy Bird, they all make me sick. So choose any one you like, take your pick.

DAVID Okay, I'll stick with B. B. Now, tell me why you're so -- ah, pudgy.

B. B. ROBIN It's no mystery why I missed the annual migration. I've never learned to say no to temptation.

I pick and I peck, I nibble and munch, and when other birds are flying, I'm out to lunch.

I glut and I gorge, I gulp and I gobble. Now I can't walk, I can only wobble. B. B. ROBIN (cont'd) I gobble anything scrumptious, from meatball to mutton. That's why I'm known as Birdland's biggest glutton.

My eating habits are so indiscreet, my stomach completely hides my feet.

I eat much too much, I keep stuffing my mouth, until my stomach's so big I can't fly South --

Or North, or West, or even East. I'm such a pig when it's time to feast.

DAVID

By the looks of you, I'd say you've feasted on half of the supermarket.

B. B. ROBIN Yes, ever since I was a little tyke, I've never met a food I didn't like.

To all food, I say Hi! Hello! and Howdy! I'm practically engaged to Apple Pan Dowdy.

I adore corned beef, ham, and pepperoni. I love all cold cuts, and that's no baloney!

Another reason for my ample size, is my passionate love affair with French fries.

My stomach is a favorite habitat, for oodles and oodles and oodles of fat.

DAVID

I guess you're not too fussy about what goes into your stomach. I'll bet you eat anything and everything. B. B. ROBIN Yes, I really have quite an aptitude, for dining on many different kinds of food.

B. B. puffs out his chest and assumes a boastful stance.

B. B. ROBIN

In many circles of feathered society, I'm famous for my gastronomical variety

DAVID

You hear that, Max? He has a big vocabulary as well as a gigantic tummy.

B. B. ROBIN

(haughtily) Parrots are not the only birds who happen to know some very big words.

DAVID

If you're not too fussy about what you eat, it doesn't matter how it's cooked, either.

B. B. ROBIN How my food is prepared, I really don't care. I'll eat it medium, well-done, or juicy rare.

You can slice it, dice it into Mullian Stew, or reheat yesterday's hash, I love leftovers, too.

Toast it, or poach it, bake it, or beat it, however you cook it, believe me, I'll eat it.

It can be any old size, thick, thin, or teeny, like big baked lasagna or skinny fettuccine.

DAVID

With all that flying around and traveling you've done, I guess you've filled your stomach in lots of places.

B. B. ROBIN I've dined elegantly from Maine to Indiana, and have never gone hungry in Boston or Savannah,

Yes, many a gourmet meal I've had in my time, dinners sumptuous and desserts sublime.

B. B. gets dreamy-eyed with nostalgia.

In New York, I recommend the the bagels, lox, sour cream, and blintzes -- but Oy! How they can put on the inches.

My stomach I could never, ever flatten, around the savory delicatessens of Manhattan.

In Philadelpia, I stuff myself with humongous hoagies, and in Scranton I can't resist those delectable pirogis.

Now there's a lady in Atlanta, and I tell you no lie, She bakes the world's most luscious potato pie.

B. B. suddenly bursts into rousing song, singing words to the tune of "DIXIE."

Oh, I love to dine in Dixie, hurray! hurray! But it sure has taken my figure away, away!

Yes, I'm nuts about food from anywhere -- China, Japan, or Morocco, and go absolutely loco over any Mexican taco

Now B. B. becomes rhapsodic with Italian gusto.

B. B. ROBIN (cont'd) But, eh? Nothing in all the world beatsa, the taste, the aroma of Italiano pizza!

DAVID

You sure like to boast about those great meals almost as much as eating them, my chubby friend.

B. B. Robin suddenly sinks into instant depression. David and Max exchange glances. In tears, B. B. turns away. David tries to console him.

> DAVID You don't seem to be too happy. I thought fat and jolly go together.

B. B. ROBIN Being fat and jolly may win you applause if your name happens to be Santa Claus.

DAVID What's the matter, then?

B. B. ROBIN Calling me chubby, that's what's the matter, everyone telling me I'm getting fatter and fatter.

DAVID Well, Just look at you. With all that blubber. Would you want your picture in one of those bird books?

B. B. is the picture of utter dejection.

B. B. ROBIN My weight is so astronomical, the sad result is pretty comical.

DAVID I've got to admit, your looks really tickled my funny bone at first. B. B. ROBIN To other birds, I'm just comic relief, the answer to the question, where's the beef?

They call me names like Friar Tuck, and say I waddle like a duck.

They like to poke fun, they love to goad, and tell me I'm fat enough to have my own ZIP code.

DAVID

Even so, I'll bet your family and friends miss you and wish you were down South with them.

B. B. ROBIN

No one will miss me, no one will care. I'll just be another fatso who vanished into thin air.

Stuffing oneself can be most delightful, but what it does to the body can be most frightful.

For example, when you're fat, there's always the question, of nagging, burning indigestion.

Another problem worthy of mention, is the likelihood of hypertension.

Finally, to complete this medical confession, obesity often leads to mental depression.

So I must admit, when all is said and done, being overweight is not much fun.

B. B. goes dreamy again and drifts into the past.

EXT. TREE BRANCHES - DAY - PAST

A summer day bursting with color. B. B. is perched on a branch warbling with unmitigated joy as his parents beam with pride.

B. B. ROBIN (V. O.) Once I was a songbird who could warble and gush. After all, my family name is Singing Thrush.

Ornithologists call us Turdus Migratorius, and our singing can be positively glorious.

Oh, how I could warble and how I could sing. It rivaled Sinatra and that crooner named Bing.

Yes, I could out-sing the nightingale and even the canary -- until I discovered the Deli and dairy.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY - PRESENT

B. B. ROBIN I recall those happy days when I could twitter and chirp, but now all I can do is belch and burp.

DAVID

You're really a mess. You can't sing anymore, and you can't fly, that's for sure. Heck, you can hardly walk! What are we going to do with you?

B. B. ROBIN
(groaning)
I'm grounded by gluttony,
never to fly again, forever
glued to the earth like
a barnyard hen.

A roly-poly ball of butter, who cannot fly, or even flutter.

I've plummeted from the sky, from heavenly heights. There'll be no more thrilling take-offs, no more fancy flights.

David suddenly jumps up with excitement. So does Max.

DAVID

I've got it Max! We'll put
B. B. on a diet, just like
Mom goes on every so often.
 (rubbing B. B.'s stomach)
We'll get him back to his
flying weight, won't we Max?

B. B. displays his outlandish belly.

B. B. ROBIN It would be much easier to lasso the moon, than trying to deflate this preposterous balloon.

What can you do with someone so plump, who's already the world's heavyweight chump?

DAVID

Just leave everything to me because I'm going to turn you into the world's lighweight champ with a diet and lots of exercise.

He hobbles to a large calendar on a wall and points to December.

DAVID

I'm on Christmas vacation from school. That should be enough time to slim you down a bit. When your folks return in the Spring, I'll bet they won't recognize you. But you've got to follow orders. Stick to the diet and exercises. No cheating, no eating between meals, because Max and I are going to keep an eye on you, won't we Max?

B. B. moans as Max barks with delight.

David removes a tape measure from the workbench, wraps it around B. B.'s huge girth, and shakes his head in amazement.

He grabs a large rubber ball off a shelf, measures its diameter with the tape, and again measure's B. B.'s waist for comparison.

He places B. B. on a scale. Max roars with laughter when he reads the number.

DAVID Hmmm. We've got a big job ahead, but when we get through with you, my friend, you'll be the thinnest, trimmest, slimmest bird in the sky.

B. B. ROBIN My fat comes in such large amounts, I don't think you can shave off even one ounce.

David and Max eye each other knowingly. Then, eyes glowing with expected triumph, they fix on B. B. As he backs away, boy and dog move toward him resolutely, both relishing the challenge of making him over.

MONTAGE OF EXERCISES A LA ROCKY

- 1. On makeshift treadmill, B. B. is huffing and puffing.
- 2. B. B. skipping rope in a big sweat.
- 3. As David keeps count, B. B. does push-ups, his eyes glassy from the effort.
- 4. B. B. jogs as David limps along and Max follows.
- David weighs B. B., shakes his head disapprovingly, then measures his waist, again shaking his head.
 B. B.'s face expresses disappointment.

END EXERCISE MONTAGE.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Atop the old crate, an unhappy B. B. pecks at a few crumbs on a plate next to a small bowl of water. He glances sadly at David as Max looks on approvingly.

> B. B. ROBIN This food is no cause for celebration. It's a one-way ticket to sure starvation.

B. B. ROBIN With this kind of stuff you keep feeding me, a bony skeleton I soon shall be.

Finally, from sheer exhaustion, B. B. falls asleep next to his plate. David picks him up gently, strokes him, and places him inside the crate. Max whimpers and snuggles up to David with a hint of canine jealousy in his eye.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

B. B. is moaning fitfully in the grip of a bad dream.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

Grunting and groaning, B. B. lifts monstrous weights that would challenge the strength and endurance of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

B. B. is on rowing machine struggling with king-sized oars.

B. B. is trying to leap over extra-high hurdles.

B. B. is running the 100-yard dash, and his lungs seem about to burst from the effort.

In the hammer-throw event. B. B. swings a metal ball the size of a basketball.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. GARAGE - DAY - ON CRATE

B. B. awakens from his terrifying dream in a big sweat and shaking with fear. A grinning Max is hovering over him. It is obvious he is enjoying the bird's predicament.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM WINDOW - DAY

David peers through the window upon a bright, cold morning. He dresses hurriedly and limps out of the room.

INT. STAIRWAY - DAY

David hobbles down the stairs as fast as he can.

INT. KITCHEN -DAY

David rushes into the kitchen past his mother at the stove preparing breakfast.

MOTHER

I told you a thousand times not to rush downstairs. It's bad for that leg of yours. Now sit down and eat your breakfast. Pancakes. Your favorite. They're nice and hot.

DAVID

Not now, Mom. No time. I've got to do something.

He grabs his coat in the hallway.

MOTHER Why the big hurry?

DAVID

It's that robin I've been telling you about, Mom. He's in bad shape. He can't fly anymore. He's too darn fat. I'm putting him on a diet

MOTHER

(joking) Have him try my diet. Look what it did for me -- ta-da!

She whirls around to display her figure.

MOTHER (cont'd) Now sit down and eat. You can take care of that bird after you -- hey, David!

Too late. David has vanished. His mother sighs, shakes her head, turns off The burner, sits down at the table, and starts picking at her pancakes. Moments later, PEGGY, a neighbor, enters.

PEGGY That coffee smells good.

MOTHER Help yourself, Peggy.

PEGGY Just saw David whiz by. Not bad for a kid with a lame leg.

MOTHER

The doctor still can't find a thing wrong. Physically, that is. It's so frustrating. And it doesn't help when some of the kids poke fun about his leg.

PEGGY

It's probably psychosomatic. The boy was fine before Bob passed away. What a shock. And he and David were so close.

The memories are too much for David's mother. She begins sobbing. Peggy tries to console her.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

David approaches a sleeping B. B. Max is right behind.

DAVID Okay, B. B.,up and at 'em! Time to exercise.

B. B.'s eyes are half closed. He tries to go back to sleep, but David's command and Max's barking are just too much. Another round of ROCKY-like exercises is about to begin.

SERIES OF EXERCISE SHOTS

1. B. B. is jogging as David and Max follow.

2 B. B. is doing chin-ups on a bar.

3. B. B. lifts barbells as David counts.

DAVID Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five Okay, that's enough for now.

B. B. is shaky and exhausted. David measures his girth, checks the results, and weighs him on a scale.

DAVID Pretty good, B. B. You're making progress.

David pats B. B.'s head. The robin offers a grateful but weak smile. Max sulks over the attention the bird is getting.

DAVID But we still have a long way to go.

B. B. face drops. Max scoffs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David's mother is trimming a Christmas tree. She looks around and calls out.

MOTHER David! How about helping me with the tree. David! Where are you?

Silence. Finally, from somewhere in the garage.

DAVID (O. S.) Be with you in a minute, Mom!

MOTHER (to herself) Well, at least he's showing a lot of love for the poor bird. That's what Christmas is all about after all. Bob would be proud of him. David enters and begins helping trim the tree.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

B. B. Robin is jumping rope as David looks on. Max is resting on his paws showing no sign of interest.

NARRATOR (V. O.) As Christmas Day approaches, there's no letup in the robin's rigorous exercise program.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -DAY

B. B. Robin jogs with David while Max trails listlessly. More images of B. B.'s exercises follow to match the Narrator's commenatary.

> NARRATOR (V. O.) More jogging, more push-ups, more iron-pumping. But, alas, not much more food. For David is determined to get the fat bird into shape, no matter how hungry he may be, or how much he complains.

INT. GARAGE - DAY - ON OLD CRATE

David pours a small amount of birdseed into B. B.'s plate. B. B. stares at the food glumly, sighs, and gives David a woeful look.

B. B. ROBIN Some other food I would have preferred. Do you really expect me to eat like a bird?

DAVID Tell you what. Stick to your diet, and I'll give you a nice reward. Maybe some juicy worms. How's that sound?

B. B. Robin shrugs and replies haughtily.

B. B. ROBIN To other birds worms are a delicacy, but they're not exactly my cup of tea.

He sighs and begins pecking at the birdseed. Max whimpers and eyes B. B. sullenly.

DAVID (playfully) Max! Better be good, or I'll put you on a birdseed diet, too!

Max is not amused, and he lumbers away to sulk in a corner.

ON RAFTERS ABOVE

CLORINDA, a scrawny, slinky, sneaky cat from somewhere in the neighborhood, silently observes the scene below with keen interest.

ON MAX

As Max watches David catering to B. B. Robin, his eyes cloud with jealousy.

ON CLORINDA

Her eyes are focused on Max. His obvious show of jealousy is not lost on her.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

It is Christmas Eve. Church bells ring out a CHRISTMAS CAROL.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David praying by his bed. Max is lounging nearby.

DAVID Lord, tell Dad how much we love and miss him. This will be our first Christmas without him. And see if you can help Mom. She's lonely, and she worries so much about my bad leg. Max shuffles over to David and snuggles next to him. David pats him.

DAVID And speaking of my leg, Lord, I'd be really happy if you could do something about it. I don't know what's wrong, but I can't get it to move the way it used to. I just can't stop limping. And, oh, yes, see what you can do to make B. B. fly and sing again. I'm doing what I can to help. Thank you, Lord. Merry Christmas and Amen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Christmas morning, and David and his mother are opening presents by the tree.

Max is moseying around sniffing at the packages. David unwraps one, removes a box of milk bones, and holds it before a delighted Max.

David's mother hands him a small package. He opens it and removes a tiny collar with a bell attached.

MOTHER It's for that bird of yours.

David hugs her, then hobbles from the room with Max tagging along.

INT. GARAGE -DAY

David tries the collar on B. B., as green-eyed Max frowns.

DAVID It's your Christmas present, B. B. From Mom. (adjusting collar) You know, you have lost some weight. Not much. But we'e getting there.

Max growls.

B. B. ROBIN

I'm beginning to think your real mission, is to put me in a state of malnutrition.

But thank your Mother, anyway, for thinking of me on Christmas Day.

EXERCISE MONTAGE

It is the final week of the year, and B. B. is going through his usual paces -- jogging, push-ups, chin-ups, skipping rope, etc.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

New Year's Eve. There is MUSIC and PARTY SOUNDS coming from upstairs. David is wearing a party hat and weighing B. B. Robin. He smiles at the results.

> DAVID You're looking good, B. B. By springtime you'll be the slimmest robin around, flying and singing all over the place. Pretty soon, everyone will be calling you 'Skinny.'

> B. B. ROBIN But what do I do when my stomach starts to growl. Cry for help, or hoot like an owl?

Midnight, and from upstairs, we hear the strains of AULD LANG SYNE. Moments later. David's mother and a few of her friends and relatives enter. She hugs David.

MOTHER Happy New Year, Son. (glancing at B. B.) Happy New Year, little bird!

DAVID See, B. B., Mom called you 'little bird.'Doesn't that mean something?

B. B. responds with a bashful smile.

David's mother hands him a a plate containing a large slice of cake, hugs him again, and returns upstairs with the others.

Max and B. B. salivate at the sight of the cake. David feeds a piece to Max. B. B. looks on with frustration. David notices and grins slyly.

DAVID

Remember my promise, B. B., if you followed instructions? You don't like worms, so some cake will have to do.

He breaks off a small piece and puts it on B. B.'s plate. B. B. gobbles it up, then sighs with satisfaction.

B, B. ROBIN

I thank you sincerely for keeping your promise. For a while I was becoming a Doubting Thomas.

DAVID

That's the last treat you'll get until you lose more weight. But you're on your way, B. B. It's a great start for the new year, and I'm proud of you.

As usual, Max can't tolerate the attention B. B. is getting, and he lumbers off.

DAVID

Now remember, B. B., school begins in a few days, and I can only be with you after school and on weekends. So, while I'm gone, you'll have to work as hard as ever and promise to follow the routine. Scout's honor. Happy New Year.

B. B. smiles weakly at the prospect ahead. David glances at the sulking Max.

DAVID Happy New Year to you, too, Max! ON MAX

Max shoots an angry glance at B. B. Despite David's greeting, he is not the happiest of dogs.

INT. GARAGE RAFTERS - NIGHT - ON CLORINDA THE CAT

In the rafters, CLORINDA, the skulking cat, is again spying on the proceedings below, where B. B. Robin is pecking at his birdseed and Max is sulking.

> NARRATOR (V. O.) High above in the rafters watching, listening, spying, is Clorinda, a sneaky, shifty, slinky cat, a scrawny scarecrow of a puss, a cadaverous bag of bones who loves to harass Max and engage him in battle. But her dislike of the dog is nothing compared to her intense hatred of birds, and especially her distaste of obesity in anyone -- bird, animal, or human being.

Clorinda glowers at B. B. Robin and gnashes her teeth.

NARRATOR (V. O.) Unlike Max, who wishes the fat interloper would just go away and not command so much of David'a time and attention, Clorinda's animosity is dark and sinister. And when it's aimed at a bird who is still on the heavy side, her hostility can be most dangerous.

ON MAX

Still sulking, Max begins sniffing suspiciously. He scans the garage warily, then looks up, spots Clorinda, and growls.

> DAVID (O. S.) Be quiet, Max. What's the matter with you, anyway?

Still eyeing Clorinda, Max softens his growl into a whimper. ON CLORINDA She offers Max an ingratiating grin. ON MAX He is puzzled by Clorinda's sudden show of affability. ON B. B. ROBIN AND DAVID - CLORINDA'S POV B. B. nibbles at his plate of birdseed. He turns to David. B. B. ROBIN I've had about enough of this starvation diet, and I suggest that you yourself try it. David nudges the plate even closer to B. B.'s beak. DAVID It'll work, you'll see. And you'll thank me for it. Or would you rather have all the birds call you nasty names? Come on, clean your plate. B. B. ROBIN (groaning)

Oh, what I wouldn't give for some real food, something tasty to elevate my mood.

ON CLORINDA

She grins devilishly, then hisses at Max to get his attention. She signals for him to follow and slinks along a rafter to a far corner of the garage.

ON MAX

Still puzzled by Clorinda's behavior, Max eyes her movement along the rafter. Slowly, silently, he moves along the garage floor in her direction. Preoccupied with B. B. Robin, David is oblivious to Max's disappearing act. INT. GARAGE -- NIGHT -- ON B. B. IN OLD CRATE

It is much later, and B. B. is sleeping with a big smile on his face. He is enjoying the most pleasant dream he has had in a long time.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

DINING ROOM, PLUSH RESTAURANT

In evening dress, B. B. is dining at the best table in a ritzy restaurant. Spread before him is a sumptuous banquet, a feast fit for the most gluttonous of kings.

As he indulges with Epicurean ostentation, he is surrounded by fawning waiters and stewards ministering to his every wish and whim.

Well-heeled diners at nearby tables nod obsequiously and offer toasts to B. B.

After gorging himself on every dish in sight, B. B. belches and burps. The other diners enthusiastically applaud, and with a lordly bow, he acknowledges their approval of his gastronomical performance.

With a final belch, B. B. signals to the maitre d' that he has finished. But he has difficulty getting his bulky body out of his chair. The maitre d' and his minions struggle to free him as other diners applaud their efforts. Despite his predicament, B. B., surfeited with food, smiles indulgently with an air of aristocratic nobless oblige.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. GARAGE -- NIGHT - ON SLEEPING B. B.

His sleeping face is the epitome of bliss.

EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Clorinda has coaxed Max outside the garage. In the shadows they peer through a window at the snoozing, smiling robin. The wily, street-wise cat is doing her palsy-walsy best to ingratiate herself with Max. She thrusts a large milk bone under his nose. Max sniffs it, is tempted, but unsure about accepting it.

CLORINDA

Go ahead, take it, my Friend. There's more where that came from. I got connections. (nudging the milk bone into Max's mouth) Sure, we've had our little differences in the past, but we'll let bygones be bygones. After all, Pal, we now have a common cause.

She puts a bony arm on Max's shoulder and speaks intimately, as to a bosom friend.

CLORINDA

You gonna let that roly-poly schmuck of a bird come between you and your master? You gonna stand by and let that feathered Fatso break up a long and beautiful friendship?

At the window, Max shoots the blissful B. B. a malevolent look. Clorinda has one eye on the bird and the other on Max.

CLORINDA

Look at him! A fat slob of a nobody snoozing away like he owned the place.

Clorinda suddenly explodes into a wild, pathological outburst.

CLORINDA I hate fat! I abhor it! I despise it, detest it in human, beast, and bird! Fat is ugly! Odious! Despicable! Horrid! Repulsive! Distasteful! Repugnant! Hideous! Vile! Foul! Nauseating!

She straightens up, and like a fashion model, proudly runs her bony fingers down her emaciated body as though her figure were the most beautiful on earth

> CLORINDA Thin is beautiful! Slim is sublime! Slender is divine! Skinny is gorgeous! Lean is mean!

After this verbal orgy, she finally composes herself and resumes with Max.

CLORINDA

Looks like you've had to take a back seat since Big Beefo arrived on the family doorstep. And you so loyal and devoted all these years. Alienation of affection! That's what it is, my Friend. Alienation of affection!

The gullible, trusting Max has always been receptive to any display of friendship. Combined with Clorinda's animosity toward B. B. it is enough to embolden him and regard the cat in a new light as an unexpected ally.

He peers through the window again at B. B., this time with an air of bravado. He barks at the sleeping bird. It is a cue for Clorinda to start pouring it on.

CLORINDA

And it's not helping your master's bum leg, either. All that running around catering to a blimpy freeloader from Palookaville. You can see the poor boy is all worn out.

She eyes Max for his reaction.

CLORINDA

If you ask me, I think his limp is even worse since Butterball showed up.

Max peers through the window again to observe David.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT - ON DAVID - MAX'S POV

David is hobbling around cleaning and drying B. B.'s plate, filling the bird's water bowl, and performing other chores.

EXT. OUTSIDE GARAGE - NIGHT - ON MAX AND CLORINDA

Tears dribble down Max's face. In phony commiseration, Clorinda manufactures a few of her own.

CLORINDA

Looks like that diet plan is working and Blubber Bird is slimming down. Could be bad news for you, Pal. Who knows? Your master may just want to adopt him as a pet. And where would that leave you, eh? Eh? (digging a bony elbow into Max's side) Out in the cold, that's where! Ever think of that, eh? Eh?

Max's eyes are fiery with jealous anger.

CLORINDA

You know what they say. Two's company, three's a crowd. Isn't it time you did something about that blubbery interloper?

An excited Max nods in approval. He tries to lick the cat's face, but she backs off with a controlled show of distaste. She clears her throat and smiles maliciously.

CLORINDA

But there's a way to, ah, er, to eliminate the problem, to get the monkey off your back, so to speak, and return to that Golden Age when it was just the two of you, Max and David. (rhapsodizing) Max and David. Has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

Max is estatic. Clorinda puts an arm around him.

CLORINDA

Take my advice, Friend, and you'll be on top again where you belong. As Numero uno. Numero uno!

Hearing this, Max is on Cloud Nine. Suddenly, Clorinda jerks the submissive dog to her bosom and bends close to his ear.

CLORINDA You heard what Blimpo Bird said. He'd give anything for some real food. Poor starving fellow. (ponderning) Hmmm. Some charitable soul should liberate him from his misery. With a wicked smile, she bends even closer to Max's ear. CLORINDA Food for thought, don't you think? Now what if --(voice fading) We no longer can hear her words. As Max listens, his eyes widen, and he nods in delight. CLOSE ON CLORINDA She is grinning diabolically. INT. - GARAGE - NIGHT B. B. Robin continues to sleep blissfully. EXT. OUTSIDE GARAGE - NIGHT Clorinda shoves another milk bone into Max's mouth. Then, cat and dog waltz away, arm in arm, like bosom buddies, two silhouettes in the moonlight. As they recede into the distance, we hear the voice of Clorinda. CLORINDA (O. S.) You know, Max, I think this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship. INT. GARAGE - DAY

Christmas vacation is over, and it is back to school for David. Wearing his backpack, he is feeding B. B. the usual meager fare. MOTHER (O. S.) David! The school bus is here. Better hurry.

DAVID

Okay Mom. (to B. B. Robin) Now, I left you enough food until I get back. Max will keep an eye on you until then. (turning to Max) Right, Max? I'm leaving you in charge. Don't let me down.

Max nods, and eyes B. B. possessively. B. B. sighs and rolls his eyes.

B. B. ROBIN

At the risk of seeming rather bumptious, I request you return with something scrumptious.

DAVID Never mind all that. Trust me. Eat your regular food, and I guarantee you'll be flying and singing better than ever.

B. B. Robin doesn't seem convinced.

MOTHER (O. S.) David! The bus!

David tickles B. B.'s tummy, pats Max, and dashes off.

EXT. STREET - DAY - ON SCHOOL BUS

As his mother watches, David hurries to join the other children boarding the bus.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY - ON WINDOW

Max appears at the window and looks around furtively.

EXT. STREET -DAY

The bus moves away as David's mother waves.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY - ON OUTSIDE WALL

Clorinda slinks and slithers along the foot of the wall, half concealing a bag behind her back. She looks around cautiously, pokes her head around the corner, and spots Max inside by the garage window. Both are now in the frame.

CLORINDA

Psst!

Max turns, his face shadowed with fear.

CLORINDA

Is the coast clear?

Max nods. Clorinda creeps up to the window and peeks in.

CLORINDA

I see Tubby has lost an inch or two. We'll have to do something about that.

She nods toward the the window latch impatiently.

CLORINDA

Wellll!

Max's eyes cloud over. Moments later, they finally light up, and he opens the window. Clorinda looks around again, and like a flash, zips into the opening.

INT. GARAGE - DAY - ON B. B. ROBIN

He is picking at his food with customary indifference.

CORNER OF GARAGE

Clorinda and Max lurk silently in the shadows.

ON B. B. ROBIN

B. B. Robin is oblivious to their presence.

ON CLORINDA AND MAX

Clorinda displays the bag she has brought.

CLORINDA

Some goodies for Sir Plumpness. Cookies, candy, nuts, and much, much more. He'll go crazy. And I'll go mad with ecstasy!

Max's tongue wags expectantly.

CLORINDA Uh! Uh! The main course is for Fatso. But these are for you.

She waves milk bones under Max's nose. He lunges for them, but she snaps them back.

CLORINDA

Not until you complete your mission. That's the deal. Now put these goodies next to Potbelly's plate. (hands Max the bag) Go! Go! I'll be up in the rafters watching. (deliriously) Oh, I can't wait to see this.

As Clorinda scoots up to the rafters, Max creeps stealthily toward the unsuspecting B. B.

Max looms closer and closer. B. B. looks up, almost freezes with fright at the approaching giant of a St. Bernard, and begins to back away.

Max grins sheepishly, displays Clorinda's bag, then dumps the goodies next to B. B.'s plate.

B. B.'s eyes nearly pop out in disbelief and ping-pong between food and dog.

Max flashes a toothy grin and nods toward the food as if he were doing B. B. the greatest favor in the world.

B. B. looks around anxiously, expecting David to appear at any moment. Satisfied, and under Max's approving eye, he begins digging into the banquet of goodies with gusto. Clorinda is relishing the sight below with equal gusto.

CLORINDA (laughing hysterically) Eat! Eat, you disgustingly obese bird! Eat all you can eat! Relish your unexpected good fortune. There's more where that came from. Lots and lots more!

ON MAX - CLORINDA'S POV

CLORINDA (O. S.) Speaking of eating, I have that blockhead of a mutt eating right out of my hand.

ON CLORINDA

She hums a merry tune and dances with mad delight along a rafter.

ON B. B. ROBIN AND MAX

Max glances up and witnesses Clorinda's crazy dance, then nudges more goodies toward B. B. As Max smiles with satisfaction, B. B. gobbles his windfall food as if there were no tomorrow.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - ON DAVID

While another student recites poetry in front of the class, David is busy sketching a series of robins, beginning with a fat bird and progressing to slimmer ones. Under the final sketch of a trim robin, he writes the name, B. B. ROBIN.

INT. GARAGE - DAY - ON B. B. ROBIN

He is gorging himself to a fare-thee-well.

ON CLORINDA

In the rafters, Clorinda is grinning fiendishly.

CLORINDA

Oh, this is indescribably delightful, delicious, and delectable! I'm delirious with joy. Eat up, Jumbo Baby! Eat to your heart's content. Bon appetit!

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

A group of boys are playing basketball. As David walks by, a boy named JACK begin to taunt him.

JACK Hey, here comes the Gimp.

FIRST BOY

Yeah!

Staring at David's leg, Jack tosses the ball to him, and David catches it.

JACK How about a game?

SECOND BOY Let him alone, Jack.

David rifles the ball into Jack's stomach but stumbles and falls at the same time. Flushed with anger, Jack lunges at David, then stops.

> JACK If you weren't such a cripple, I'd make you pay for that.

The sympathetic boy helps David up.

DAVID

Thanks. (eyeing Jack) What's he matter with him?

SECOND BOY Jack likes to make fun of people. He can't help it.

DAVID He could if he really wanted to. David brushes himself off and hobbles away.

INT. GARAGE - DAY - ON B. B. ROBIN AND MAX

B. B. Robin is nearly cross-eyed from overindulgence. He finally gives up gorging himself, belches several times, staggers into his crate, and slumps down. Within seconds he is sleeping and belching intermittently.

Max quickly removes all the evidence. And just as quickly, Clorinda appears.

CLORINDA Well done, Pal. Mission accomplished. For today, that is. (offering milk bones) You earned these. (glancing at B. B.) Look at him. Did you ever see such a glutton. Revolting, isn't it? (stretching out her hand) Okay, hand over the bag. We'll need it for next time. It may take a day or two to scrounge up more goodies. Remember, mum's the word. Eat. Enjoy. See you soon.

As Max munches on his milk bones, Clorinda darts away and vanishes through the window.

EXT. WINTER SCENE - DAY

The Narrator resumes and speaks over images of snow falling and wind whistling through leafless trees.

NARRATOR (V.O.) And so, through the early winter weeks, with the jealous and submissive Max as her dupe and fall guy, the scrawny, emaciated, depraved Clorinda continues to sabotage David's hard work and frustrate his dream of helping B. B. Robin regain his flying weight. SERIES OF SHOTS

The Narrator continues over images of Clorinda's relentless assault on B. B., his worsening condition, and David's mounting frustration.

NARRATOR (V. O.) Her wicked scheme satisfies the two ornery sides of her nature, the sadistic side that enjoys giving pain to others, and the masochistic side that enjoys inflicting pain on herself, by causing and encouraging the very obesity she finds so repugnant and so intolerable. But even worse, her viciousness threatens the very life of her hated victim.

- 1. Max feeding B. B., who now eats with great relish.
- 2. David feeding B. B., who pecks at his food listlessly, then walks away.
- 3. Clorinda rewarding Max with milk bones.
- 4. B. B. trying to do push-ups, then quickly giving up.
- 5. David weighing a heavier B. B. Robin, measuring his waist, then shaking his head in frustration.
- 6. David in bed tossing and turning with worry.
- 7. Clorinda on garage rafters laughing diabolically.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Among the alley's ash cans and debris, Clorinda is playing cards with her feline cronies, who are as scrawny, shifty-eyed, and disputable as she is.

> FIRST CRONY How's your campaign going against Big-Belly Bird?

SECOND CRONY

Yeah, we deserve a report. We certainly pay you enough in candy, cookies, and other goodies.

CLORINDA

That's protection payment. In exchange, I protect you against your enemies. That's the deal we made, remember?

She conks the Second Crony on the head.

THIRD CRONY Come on, Clorinda, don't hold out. We're dying for some news.

CLORINDA

Well, I hate to brag, but I got that big stupid dog, Max, eating out of my hand, literally and figuratively.

FIRST CRONY You sure got brains, Clorinda.

SECOND CRONY She's a genius. (whispering to Third Crony) And such a beautiful body. So svelte.

FIRST CRONY Tell us more, Clorinda.

CLORINDA

Well, that gimpy kid hasn't
a clue to what's happening.
 (laughs uproariously)
Oh, it's too delicious.
I can hardly stand the ecstasy
of it all. And what's more - (almost losing control)
-- that schlemiel of a kid
thinks El Blimpo is going
to fly again. Maybe when
elephants start sprouting wings.

Clorinda's cronies explode in laughter. While they are cackling raucously, Clorinda sneaks a card from the deck and slips it into the hand she's holding. Eyeing her cronies slyly, she slaps down her cards in triumph.

> CLORINDA (grinning wickedly) Anyone beat four aces?

CLOSE ON CLORINDA

Her devilish smile fills the frame.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

David and his mother are having breakfast.

DAVID

I can't figure it out, Mom I have B. B. on a strict diet, and he keeps gaining weight anyway.

MOTHER

Maybe he's just naturally heavy, Son. Ever think of that? Or Maybe he's finding food somewhere.

DAVID

Oh, no, Mom. Not with good old Max watching him like a hawk.

His mother puts an arm on his shoulder.

MOTHER

David, you have more important things to worry about. (glancing at his bad leg) Like that leg of yours. We have to do something about it. I hate to bring it up again, but you need to see a specialist.

DAVID Aw, not that again, Mom! INT. GARAGE - DAY

As Max looks on, B. B. Robin gobbles up his latest offering. Lurking in the b.g., unseen by B. B., Clorinda hisses for Max's attention. Max obeys and joins the cat.

CLORINDA

Let us consult, shall we? You know, this daytime stuff is for the birds -hey, that's a pun! (laughs and collars Max) We need more action, Pal. It's time to speed things up. How about a a little night duty, eh?

Max's face expresses doubt.

CLORINDA (cont'd) Not to worry, Friend. (dipping into a bag) Here's something special, a reward for your hard work. And loyalty

Clorinda dangles a sizable cut of beef before Max's amazed eyes and salivating tongue.

CLORINDA

It's yours! Right now! No waiting. A strapping fellow like you can't eat milk bones forever. You're in the big leagues now. Here, take it.

Max sinks his teeth into the meat and is transported. Clorinda watches with huge satisfaction. It doesn't take long for Max to polish off the meat. As he licks his chops, Clorinda bends close to his ear.

> CLORINDA As I was saying, I'm ready for some nocturnal activity. Now, here's my plan --

She whispers into Max's ear.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He's kneeling beside his bed praying.

DAVID And, Lord, help me find out what's happening to B. B. He should be losing weight, not gaining it.

EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Clorinda is creeping along the roof dragging a bag. At the roof's edge, she leaps to a tree branch and slithers down the trunk to the ground.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Max is waiting by the open window. Clorinda oozes through.

CLORINDA Night shift reporting. (handing the bag to Max) A royal feast, this time, Pal -- pastry, doughnuts, jelly roll, coconut cream pie, you name it! Oh, are we going to have some fun tonight!

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Worried about B. B. Robin, he is having a troubled sleep.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Max places a heap of goodies before B. B. Robin, who is noticeably heavier. He doesn't pounce on the food as usual but looks at Max and sighs deeply.

> B. B. ROBIN Something tells me this isn't right. Maybe I shouldn't take another bite.

Max nudges the food closer. At first B. B. hesitates, but he finally begins eating.

IN THE RAFTERS

More excited than ever, Clorinda begins shouting.

CLORINDA Come on, Max. Stuff the fat slob's beak! Go! Go! Go!

She cackles hysterically. Soon, she descends to the garage floor and eggs on Max.

CLORINDA Don't stop. More food for Beefy Bird! More! More!

Clorinda is now wild with hatred, shrieking louder than ever. Soon, Max is caught up in the madness and begins barking up a storm. Cat and dog are scaring the wits out of B. B.

> CLORINDA (cont'd) Give it to him! More! More! Fat is ugly! Fat is repugnant! Thin is beautiful! Slim is sublime!

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David is tossing and turning. Gradually, the unholy RACKET from the garage penetrates his consciousness. He suddenly awakens, frightened and confused.

Now the strange SOUNDS are blended with gasps and groans. David tries to ascertain where they are coming from. Finally, he brightens.

DAVID

The garage!

He bolts out of bed and frantically hobbles to the door.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Prodded by the demented, wild-eyed Clorinda, Max hovers over the trembling B. B. and forces him to swallow a formidable glob of pastry much too large for his beak. Trapped by the menacing Max, B. B. lies groaning on his back, bloated, cross-eyed, and totally helpless. Clorinda is dancing wildly, shrieking and streaking all around the garage hysterically

CLORINDA Give it to him, Max, Baby! Stuff the big blimp.

As Clorinda cackles in triumph , David appears at the top of the stairway. Astonished at the scene he is witnessing, he hobbles at top speed down the stairs.

DAVID Max! What's going on? Max! Stop it! You'll kill B. B., Max! (spotting Clorinda) Where'd that cat come from?

Angrily, he pulls Max away from the defenseless bird. The shamefaced dog shuffles away.

Her scheme gone awry, Clorinda hisses at David and lunges at him savagely, her sharp claws ready to attack. David grabs a broom and chases her around the garage. Soon, the scrambling is too much for the screaming, panic-stricken cat, and she collapses, gasping and heaving convulsively.

David stands over the cat and is soon joined by Max and the trembling B. B. All three stare in amazement as the vicious, quivering Clorinda goes limp.

> DAVID She looks dead, and I never touched her.

David's mother appears on the stairway.

MOTHER What's going on? What's all that racket?

DAVID It's this cat, Mom, a real mean one.

His mother approaches Clorinda for a closer look.

DAVID Don't get too close, Mom. She may be playing possum. I don't think so. she looks half dead. One of those stray cats, I'll bet. And all skin and bones. She needS a Vet, the one we take Max to. We'll take her there in the morning. For now, cover her with some towels, and I'll get some milk.

David grabs towels from a hook and covers the stricken cat. He turns a suspicious eye on B.B. Robin and Max.

DAVID Something fishy has been going on here. I just know it. I'll find out sooner or later. All right, Max, out! And stay away from B. B., you hear?

As Max responds with a sheepish grin and clambers up the stairway, David picks up B. B. Robin and places him in his crate.

DAVID

So you've been eating behind my back, eh? Well, starting tomorrow, you're going to work twice as hard as before.

B. B. Robin is shamefaced.

B. B. ROBIN I'm sorry I caused you so much grief, but I promise to turn over a brand new leaf.

INT. VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A veterinarian is examining Clorinda as David and his mother watch.

VETERINARIAN No cuts, scratches, or bruises anywhere. Can't find a thing.

DAVID

No one hurt her. She attacked me actually. Then she just flopped down, I thought she was dead.

VETERINARIAN

Well, she's pretty close to it. Lucky you brought her in now. It's severe malnutrition, that's for sure. An alley cat, no doubt.

MOTHER

We don't know. She doesn't look like anyone's pet.

The Veterinarian moves his hands along Clorinda's body, takes a hard look at her, and shakes his head.

VETERINARIAN

Skin and bones. Something strange about this cat. If I didn't see it with my own eyes, I would't have believed it. Anorexia Nervosa.

DAVID

What's that?

VETERINARIAN

Well, in humans its a morbid fear of gaining weight, and it usually leads to malnutrition and excessive weight loss. If it isn't treated in time, death is a distinct possibility.

DAVID

What do you call the opposite, when someone eats too much.

VETERINARIAN

That all depends. It could be plain overindulgence or gluttony. If it's chronic, it results in obesity, you know, being overweight And that's not too good, Then there's something called bulimia.

DAVID

Bulimia?

VETERINARIAN

It's an abnormal craving for food. You eat and eat until you throw up. And that's as bad in its way as anorexia.

MOTHER

Well, anorexia or not, we can't take on a cat, especially a sick one. We already have Max. (eyeing David) Not to mention a fat bird, a temporary house guest, I hope.

VETERINARIAN

Well, I can place this cat in the city animal shelter. I donate some time once a week, and I'm sure we can fatten her up. Maybe someone will want her as a pet.

David's rolling eyes express serious doubt.

MOTHER Let's hope so. Well, thank you. Let's go, David.

David hobbles toward the door, and his limp catches the attention of the veterinarian.

VETERINARIAN

I see David is still limping. He was the last time you brought Max in for shots.

David's mother shrugs and sighs.

MOTHER The doctor can't seem to find anything wrong physically. The veterinarian glances at David again.

VETERINARIAN Could be psychological.

MOTHER I agree. But finding a solution is another matter.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

ON DAVID B. B. ROBIN AND MAX

Dressed like a coach in sweatshirt, baseball cap, and whistle around his neck, David is lecturing an attentive and very humble bird and dog.

DAVID

I'm surprised at you two. You Max, playing sucker to that awful cat and sneaking in food to B. B. And you, B. B., going along with him and falling off your diet.

Dog and bird turn crimson with shame.

DAVID

I hope the both of you have learned your lesson, because from now on, there'll be no funny business. (eyeing B. B.) B. B., you're going to work harder than ever. Right? You're going to stay with your diet and sweat your weight off like never before.

B. B. Robin nods in agreement.

B. B. ROBIN From a horrible fate you have saved me twice. So I promise to follow your excellent advice.

David points to the calendar.

DAVID

Spring is around the corner, and we have to make up for lost time. We need to get you in shape for the day when your folks return to see a new, improved B. B. Robin.

B. B. sucks in his paunch and stiffens with pride.

DAVID

(turning to Max)
And you, Max, you're going
to cooperate. Right? You're
going to make sure B. B.
sticks to the plan. Right?
 (eyeing dog and bird sternly)
And the two of you are going
to be pals. Right?

ON MAX AND B. B.

Max and B. B. eye each other. Shamed into cooperation, Max finally plods over to B. B. and licks him. B. B. grimaces, then nods in assent.

B. B. ROBIN If Max is willing to make amends, I see no reason we can't be friends.

ON DAVID

His face spreads into a broad grin.

DAVID Okay, let's get started.

EXT. LATE WINTER SCENE - DAY

NARRATOR

The ordeal with the wretched Clorinda and her dirty tricks has ended. Now, as winter moves toward Spring, boy, bird, and dog are making a fresh start, And with a greater determination than ever to succeed.

SERIES OF SHOTS

This series of shots shows how determined David, B. B., and Max are to succeed. Max no longer sulks in piques of jealousy. B. B. no longer frets about his skimpy meals.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

1. B. B. strenuously doing push-ups.

- 2. B. B. skipping rope with seeming enjoyment.
- 3. B. B. eating his dietary fare and not complaining.
- 4. David measuring B. B.'s waist, then smiling with satisfaction.
- 5. David weighing B. B. and smiling.
- 6. B. B., noticeably slimmer, checking his appearance before a mirror.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

- 7. B. B. negotiating an obstacle course of hurdles, ladders, boulders, etc.
- 8. B. B. jogging earnestly with Max panting along and David hobbling in the rear. Suddenly, David stumbles and falls.
- ON WINDOW
- 9. David's mother watches and gasps.
- ON DAVID
- David gets up, brushes himself off, and limps after B. B. and Max.
- ON WINDOW
- 11. David's mother has a troubled look.

INT. KITCHEN -DAY

12. David's mother is punching numbers on a telephone.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

INT. PYSCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

David's mother is speaking with DR. OWEN.

MOTHER

I appreciate your seeing me on such short notice. But I'm at my wit's end about David.

DR. OWEN

Yes, your doctor gave me the particulars. Your son's leg, your husband's death. I'd like to see the boy.

MOTHER

He doesn't know I'm here and probably won't like the idea. What do you think is wrong with his leg?

DR. OWEN

Well, even without seeing him, his limp may be what we call a conversion disorder.

MOTHER

Conversion disorder?

DR. OWEN

Well, simply put, the patient, whether child or adult, converts an emotional or psychological problem, a traumatic experience, into a physical symptom.

MOTHER

Like my husband's death.

DR. OWEN

Yes. A patient may convert such an experience into blindness, deafness, or a paralyzed leg. It's also called hysterical neurosis. MOTHER Robert's death shattered the boy.

DR. OWEN I'd like to see him..

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

David and his mother are having dinner.

DAVID B. B. is doing great, Mom. He's getting slimmer day by day. And it won't be long before I have him flying againl.

His mother stares at him with concern.

MOTHER I saw you fall down yesterday. Maybe your bird's getting better, but your leg hasn't improved any. I'm worried, David. This can't go on much longer. (nervously) I -- I went to see a specialist today. Our doctor referred him, and he'd like to--

DAVID

You mean a head-shrinker? Thanks a lot, Mom! You want everyone to make fun of me?

MOTHER

Aren't some of the kids already doing that? teasing you about your leg? DAVID (angrily) So what! See if I care!

MOTHER

(snapping) Don't you want to walk normally again? Or would you rather limp and hobble around for the rest of your life?

David shoves his chair back and hobbles away in a huff.

MOTHER David! You come back here! David!

The frustrated woman begins to sob.

MOTHER Oh, God. Please help my boy. (beat) The way he is helping that bird.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

David's mother is talking on the telephone.

MOTHER I tried, Doctor Owen, but I couldn't convince him to see you. I'm sorry. (listening) Yes, I understand. It's a hard thing for a young boy to do. If he changes his mind, I'll call you.

She hangs up, then stares into space, her eyes heavy with worry.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

The landscape has turned greener and more colorful, a harbinger of Spring. B. B. Robin is jogging by the park with David and Max in the rear.

ON B. B. ROBIN

He is slimmer, with only a trace of pudginess.

DAVID (pointing) There it is, Guys!

B. B. and Max turn to look.

DAVID That's the park where B. B. will take off and fly again. And he's almost ready for that big day.

B. B. stares at the park with doubt in his eyes.

B. B. ROBIN But what if I just can't do it? Then everyone will say I blew it.

DAVID We've come this far. Trust me.

Max barks his approval.

INT. NEWS ROOM LOCAL NEWSPAPER - DAY

MIKE LIPTON is talking on the telephone.

LIPTON Are you the boy's mother? (listening) I'm Mike Lipton, a reporter on the Bulletin. I heard about your son and that bird. Is it true? (listening) It is. Sounds like a great story. Mind if I interview him? And you, too? (listening) Yes, after school. Fine. See you both then.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Lipton is interviewing David and his mother with his tape recorder as B. B. Robin and Max look on.

You mean to say, David, this bird was so fat he couldn't fly anymore?

DAVID

Or sing, either. So I put him on a diet and training program

LIPTON You're kidding.

Lipton glances at David's mother for corroboration.

MOTHER

It's true.

Lipton studies B. B. Robin.

LIPTON

It looks like your program has worked. He's pretty slick looking. But is he ready to fly?

DAVID I hope so. We won't know till Saturday when I take him to the park for a tryout.

LIPTON Sort of like the Wright Brothers, eh? Has he done any warbling?

DAVID

Not yet.

LIPTON

He seems pretty quiet. Hasn't made a sound. Maybe he's got laryngitis. But I guess he understands what you're doing.

David and B. B. Robin exchange knowing glances. Then David turns to Lipton with a half smile.

> DAVID We sort of communicate with each other.

Lipton photogaphs David with B. B., then David with his mother, B. B. and Max. He prepares to leave.

LIPTON I'll be there Saturday. I wouldn't miss it for the world. Keep your fingers crossed. (to David's mother) Thanks for your time and cooperation. (to David) You, too, David. Good luck to you and your bird.

As David follows Lipton out, the reporter notices his limp.

LIPTON Your leg? An accident?

DAVID

No.

LIPTON Soccer injury? Basketball?

DAVID

Nope.

David's mother listens, then joins the two.

MOTHER He doesn't like to talk about it.

LIPTON Sure, Well, see you Saturday.

EXT. FRONT YARD -- DAY

As David returns to the garage, his mother speaks to Lipton quietly.

MOTHER Please don't mention his limp. It would only embarrass him. People will notice it, anyway.

LIPTON

Sure, you have my word.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSES - DAY

Friday morning and people are picking up their newspapers on lawns and porches.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

At breakfast with his wife and two children, a man is reading the newspaper. He points to an article, then hands the newspaper to his wife.

> MAN I've heard of everything, but this takes the cake.

WIFE (reading) It's about some little boy and his pet bird, a robin. It got so fat, it couldn't fly anymore.

The two children scoot around and peer over their mother's shoulder as she reads.

FIRST CHILD Whoever heard of a robin as a pet?

WIFE The boy is going to try to get it to fly this Saturday. In City Park.

She hands the newspaper back to her husband. He reads more of the story and shakes his head in disbelief.

> MAN This I got to see.

> CHILDREN (in unison) Me, too!

INT. NEWS ROOM TELEVISION STATION -DAY

SUPERVISOR displays newspaper headline in front of LINDA GOMEZ, TV reporter, and TED NELSON, cameraman. It reads:

GROUNDED ROBIN TO TEST WINGS ON SATURDAY 12-YEAR-OLD BOY HOPES TO GET BIRD BACK INTO SKY

SUPERVISOR Have you seen this?

Gomez and Nelson study the headline.

GOMEZ (indifferent)

So?

SUPERVISOR

The boy rescued the bird during that big snowstorm last Christmas. It was so fat it couldn't fly and got snowbound. The kid put the bird on a diet, and he thinks it can fly again.

Gomez and Nelson respond with bored faces.

NELSON

Is this some joke? One of those local pranks we get every so often?

SUPERVISOR

If it's good enough for Mike Lipton of the Bulletin, it's good enough for us.

GOMEZ

Give us a break. We've got other stories to cover.

NELSON Yeah, we're up to our ears.

SUPERVISOR This one's hot.

SUPERVISOR (cont'd) It's more refreshing than the political nonsense we've been handling, and I want it covered. You two be at that park tomorrow.

GOMEZ Shall we interview the robin, too?

The Supervisor gives her a cool stare.

INT. SMALL CAFETERIA - DAY

Gomez and Nelson are on a coffee break.

GOMEZ

If an elephant flies, that's news. But a bird?

NELSON If you ask me, this story is for the birds.

GOMEZ Spare me the cornball.

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

The barber is cutting a man's hair while others wait their turn.

BARBER Did you read about that kid and the bird?

MAN IN CHAIR No, what's it about?

The waiting customers perk up.

BARBER Well, you're not going to believe this, but on Saturday, this kid is going to -- We can't hear the rest of the barber's words. Listening outside on the ledge of a barbershop window are a couple of Clorinda's disreputable friends.

> FIRST CAT Did you hear that? The gang's got to know about this. Let's go.

The two leap down and hurry away along an alley.

SECOND CAT Too bad Clorinda is laid up in that hospital.

FIRST CAT She's lucky to be alive. She was nearly a goner.

SECOND CAT Maybe we ought to go see her.

The first cat stops and rubs his chin, reflecting.

FIRST CAT

Yeah, a surprise visit. We'll give her the bad news about that miserable bird. I can't wait to see see her face when she hears it. She'll explode, as usual.

SECOND CAT She ain't going to like it, that's for sure.

FIRST CAT You know Clorinda. She'll think of something. Come on, let's tell the gang first.

They hurry on.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

David hobbles in with a newspaper and shows it to B. B.

DAVID Look, B. B., your picture in the paper! I'll bet the whole town will come out to see you fly.

B. B. studies the photo but doesn't seem impressed.

B. B. ROBIN I'm too scared and full of anxiety, to enjoy my celebrity in local society.

DAVID Don't worry. You'll be fine tomorrow.

EXT. ANIMAL SHELTER - NIGHT

Several of Clorinda's cadaverous cronies are sneaking inside through a window.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - NIGHT

In the darkness, the cats begin searching for Clorinda and bump into each other.

FIRST CAT

Shhhhhhh.

They tiptoe past sleeping animals, but Clorinda is not among them. Soon, they approach a dark corner of the room.

SECOND CAT (whispering) Look, there she is, in that cage all by herself, sleeping.

THIRD CAT She looks awful bad. And heavier, too.

FIRST CAT Geez, don't tell her that. She'll blow sky high

ON CLORINDA

A heavier Clorinda is confined in a cage away from other animals. With trepidation, the other cats tiptoe over to her.

> FIRST CAT (softly) Psssst -- Clorinda.

Clorinda awakens with a snarl. As she gradually recognizes her cronies, she puts on a woeful face.

CLORINDA I thought you had forgotten your poor old friend. See, they got me in solitary. They think I'm some kind of menace to the other inmates. Me -- a menace? It's torture in here. Oh, how I suffer!

SECOND CAT Gee, you look great, Clorinda.

THIRD CAT Yeah, never better.

CLORINDA

Great? You imbeciles! Can't you
see I'm getting fat and ugly.
These do-gooder shmucks in here
are trying to kill me with
their crummy fatty food.
 (tearfully)
They're sabotaging my good
looks. How can I ever face
the world again?

FIRST CAT Poor Clorinda. How horrible.

CLORINDA

Then those creepy, snotty kids and their do-gooder parents come in and want to take me home to feed me even more of their lousy calories and cholesterol. Clorinda starts imitating some of the visitors in a FALSETTO VOICE.

CLORINDA

'Look, Mommy, the skinny
cat. Don't they feed the
poor thing?' 'Can we take
her home and feed her,
Mommy? Please.'
 (exploding in indignation)
Imagine -- me a house pet!
Stupid people. Don't they
realize fat is ugly, thin
is beautiful, and --

FIRST CAT -- lean is mean! We know, Clorinda.

CLORINDA

Clorinda nods her approval. Her cronies gather round in admiration.

SECOND CAT Same old Clorinda. She doesn't ever change.

CLORINDA

And that quack doctor they got here. He said I got a thing called anorexia nervosa. That's why they're feeding me all this high cholesterol crapola. Anorexia nervosa! How do you like that?

The other cats look terrified.

THIRD CAT Is it catching?

Corinda suddenly eyes her cronies with suspicion.

CLORINDA

Okay, out with it. You didn't come to visit your sick friend and protector on a mission of mercy. You've got something in mind. Spill it! FIRST CAT

It's that bird, you know, the fatso robin, Well, he ain't so fat anymore. He's back in shape and going to fly again. Well, he's going to try, anyway.

Clorinda bursts into laughter.

CLORINDA Fly again? El Blimpo? Don't make me laugh. You're putting me on.

The first cat whips out a newspaper and puts it under Clorinda's nose.

SECOND CAT It's true. The bird ain't fat anymore. Look, it's in the newspaper. The whole town's talking about it.

Clorinda begins reading the headline.

ON NEWSPAPER HEADLINE AND PHOTO

GROUNDED ROBIN TO TEST WINGS ON SATURDAY 12-YEAR-OLD BOY HOPES TO GET BIRD BACK INTO SKY

Clorinda is seething with rage.

CLORINDA First, that rotten kid nearly kills me. Now he's going to humiliate me. (exploding) I want revenge! But I'm stuck in this miserable rathole. You guys will have to be my arms and legs. I'll be the brains, as usual.

FIRST CAT Maybe we could fatten up the bird again Too late. The kid won't let you near him now.

SECOND CAT What do we do, then?

Clorinda ponders, grimacing with each passing thought. Finally, she brightens.

CLORINDA

Terrorize the feathered fathead! Break down his morale! Frighten him to death! Scare the living daylights out of him.

FIRST CAT

How do we do that?

CLORINDA

Heckle him! Harass him! Hiss him! Hector him! Bully him! Badger Him! Needle him! Ruffle him! Pester him! Persecute him! Don't let the bugger get off the ground.

THIRD CAT

What about the dog you had eating out of your hand, remember?

CLORINDA

Stay away from that dumb mutt. We can't trust him anymore.

Clorinda sighs and signals her cronies to move closer.

CLORINDA (cont'd) Do this, my lovelies, for your old pal. For your loyal protector. For old time's sake. (exploding again) Heckle him! Harass him! Hector him! That's the ticket!

Clorinda laughs hysterically until she is so weak, she slumps into the arms of her cronies and speaks in a whisper.

CLORINDA Avenge me. Avenge me. INT. GARAGE - NIGHT - CLOSE ON B. B. ROBIN

He is sleeping and moaning through a bad dream.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

B. B. runs, flaps his wings, tries to fly, but rams into a tree.

He tries again, but this time Clorinda pops out from behind the tree and chases him across the park.

Clorinda is about to pounce on B. B. As catastrophe seems imminent, we hear David's voice, and B. B. feels himself being shaken.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

David is trying to rouse B. B. Robin.

DAVID Wake up, sleepyhead! Today's the big day. Up and at 'em!

B. B. wakes up, disoriented.

DAVID (cont'd) This is it! The day you earn your wings. Time to get going.

B. B. is bleary-eyed and full of doubt and fear.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

A cloudless Saturday with a hint of Spring in the air. Spectators begin arriving, townspeople, as well as David's neighbors, friends, and classmates.

ON TV VAN

Linda Gomez and her cameraman, Ted Nelson, are by the van preparing to cover the event.

ON MIKE LIPTON AMONG SPECTATORS

Mike Lipton is interviewing some of the spectators.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

They begin arriving and making a noisy, snarling entrance.

ON CAR ARRIVING

David's mother arrives in her car. David, carrying B. B. and Max step out. Friends, neighbors, and others rush over to greet the arrivals and offer best wishes.

ON SPECTATORS

Spectators gooseneck and murmer as David, B. B., and Max head for an open space on the park green.

ON B. B. ROBIN

He is slimmer and sleeker. Gone is the bulk and the beef. Gone is the wobble.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

They snicker and jeer at David.

FIRST CAT There's that rotten kid who put poor Clorinda in the hospital.

All the cats hiss David.

SECOND CAT Yeah, that's the thanks Clorinda gets for her kindness in feeding the bird that lousy kid was starving to death.

More hisses aimed at David. A third cat screams at B. B. Robin

THIRD CAT You ain't never gonna fly no more! You're gonna fall flat on your face!

The cats keep hissing and heckling.

ON B. B. ROBIN

He glances at the cats with a forlorn look and turns to David.

B. B. ROBIN Those loudmouthed cats may just be right. Maybe we had better cancel this flight.

DAVID We'll show them, B. B. Won't we Max?

Max nods and dances around. B. B. is doubtful. David eyes Clorinda's cronies.

> DAVID Max, keep an eye out for anyone who tries to interfere with B. B. Those cats out there, for instance.

David points to the cats. Max nods and shoots a menacing look at the cats. David turns to B. B.

DAVID Okay, let's limber up.

B. B. does a few stretches and push-ups, then jogs in small circles.

ON LINDA GOMEZ AND TED NELSON BY THE TV VAN

They are making final adjustments. After a test run, Gomez begins speaking to the camera.

GOMEZ (on camera) Good morning everyone. Linda Gomez reporting live from beautiful City Park. We are also videotaping this historic and unusual event for later viewing.

INT. BEAUTY SHOP -DAY

As Gomez continues, we pick up her image and voice on a TV set in a busy beauty shop.

> GOMEZ (on TV screen) Call it Saturday in the Park with B. B. Robin.

LINDA GOMEZ (cont'd) It's the bird who, grounded by obesity, had lost his ancestral ability to fly and sing. And who nearly froze to death in the snow until twelve-year-old David came to the rescue and put him on a diet and a rigorous training program. Has all that dieting and all that exercise paid off? Will they help this robin get back into the sky? Today, we're going to find out

Over Gomez's commentary, several customers begin jabbering.

FIRST WOMAN Did you ever hear of anything like this? It's unbelievable.

SECOND WOMAN It's bizarre.

THIRD WOMAN My nephew goes to the same school as that boy with the bird.

HAIRDRESSER

Maybe it's some kind of stunt. You know, just to entertain the crowd.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

It is the same barber shop we saw earlier. All eyes are on the TV screen.

GOMEZ (on TV screen) The big question today. Will the new, improved slimmer robin get his wings back?

FIRST MAN Now I've seen and heard everything!

GOMEZ (on TV screen) Will the bird be able to fly again with the help of his twelve-year-old mentor and benefactor? SECOND MAN You've got to hand it to that kid. He sure has a lot of patience.

GOMEZ (on TV screen) We'll know the answer before the morning is over.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY - ON LINDA GOMEZ

She glances at David and B. B. Robin.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN - GOMEZ POV

David and B. B. are almost ready to give it the big try.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER -DAY

Several employees and visitors are gathered in front of a TV set watching the event. Animals nearby are also watching.

ON CLORINDA

From her corner cage, the morose Clorinda also watches.

GOMEZ (on TV screen) It looks like boy and bird are almost ready for takeoff. (glancing at spectators) And the crowd here is getting quieter. You can almost feel the tension.

ON CLORINDA

She is sneering and hissing.

EXT. PARK - DAY - ON LINDA GOMEZ

GOMEZ (on camera) I don't know about you viewers, but my stomach is fluttering with big butterflies. FIRST MAN If I were a betting man, I'd say the bird's going to make it.

A man in front turns around.

SECOND MAN Well I am a betting man, and I say the bird won't get off the ground.

FIRST MAN Why's that?

SECOND MAN Because he hasn't flown in months. He's rusty, and he looks pretty scared to me.

The first man studies B. B. and David, then smiles.

FIRST MAN I'm not a betting man, but I'll wager ten dollars the bird flies.

SECOND MAN You're on. It'll be an easy sawbuck in my pocket.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

They are sitting close to the two men

FIRST CAT Did you hear that? One of those shlemiels is a real loser. Imagine. Betting on the bird.

The cronies all cackle uproariously. Then they begin hissing and heckling B. B. Robin.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

While Max jumps around in anticipation, David gives B. B. a pep talk.

Don't let that heckling bother you. Just concentrate on flying. it's the moment we've been waiting for. No turning back. Remember what I told you. Run as fast as you can, then start spreading your wings.

Max sticks his nose in.

DAVID Max! Move away. B. B. needs lots of room.

B. B. ROBIN What I really need to turn the trick, is a big, big miracle pretty darn quick!

DAVID Okay, time for takeoff. Ready, get set, GO!

As spectators cheer and Clorinda's cronies jeer, B. B. starts streaking along the grass.

ON LINDA GOMEZ

GOMEZ (on camera) There he goes! The moment of truth has arrived.

ON B. B. ROBIN

B. B. runs as fast as he can. He flaps his wings, and when he leaps a few inches off the ground, it appears he is on the verge of taking off.

ON DAVID

DAVID Come on, B. B, I know you can do it!

ON SPECTATORS

Thinking B. B. is airborne, spectators gasp.

ON B.B. ROBIN

But B. B. begins tripping, slipping, skipping, skidding, and doing almost everything but take off.

ON CORINDA'S CRONIES

They are guffawing raucously.

FIRST CAT What a fraud! I want my money back!

SECOND CAT

Me, too!

THIRD CAT

Booooo!

The other cats join in jeering B. B.

ON B. B. ROBIN AND DAVID

B. B. stops to catch his breath, and David limps toward him.

GOMEZ (on camera) Here's a surprise, the young boy is limping. I didn't notice it until he started running out to his bird. I'll try to find out more.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

Still hobbling, David arrives by B. B. Robin's side.

B. B. ROBIN I knew I should have stayed in bed and quit while I was way ahead.

I remember when flying was a piece of cake, but now it's just one big mistake.

DAVID It's only your first try. Cheer up. Remember, if at first you don't succeed, try, try -- B. B. ROBIN (interrupting) If at first you don't succeed, maybe it's better not to proceed.

ON GOMEZ AND DAVID'S MOTHER

Gomez is talking brIefly with David's mother, but not on camera. We can't hear their conversation.

ON MIKE LIPTON

He is observing Gomez and David's mother.

ON GOMEZ AND DAVID'S MOTHER

Gomez leaves David's mother, and as she heads back to the TV van, she is joined by Mike Lipton.

LIPTON It's about the kid's leg, isn't it?

GOMEZ You knew? It wasn't in your story.

LIPTON His mother asked me to leave it out.

GOMEZ It's out in the open, now. But she didn't want to talk about it.

LIPTON

I know. It's been a pretty
big load for her these past
months with her husband
dying and all that.
 (walking away)
I'll see you on the
six-o'clock news.

GOMEZ

And the eleven o'clock news, too, don't forget..

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

DAVID We're not giving up. Okay, let's give it another try One, two, three, GO!

Again, B. B. races down the field followed by David and Max. Again, he trips and falls.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

And again, Clorinda's friends explode into hysterical laughter.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

David hobbles over to a crestfallen B. B. Robin.

B. B. ROBIN It's really no use, I forgot how to fly. I give up, I've had it, I'm ready to die.

DAVID You can't quit now. I'm sure you can do it.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

Their jeering is louder than ever.

FIRST CAT Hey, Robin, you want to fly? Hire a helicopter.

SECOND CAT You're all washed up. Time to go back to Palookaville.

THIRD CAT Ever think of joining the circus? As a clown?

The cats roar with laughter.

ON MAX

He snarls in the direction of the cats.

DAVID Don't let those jokers scare you. Show them what you're made of. Give it another try.

For the third time, B. B. streaks down the field. Running to keep pace with B. B., David stumbles and falls.

ON SPECTATORS

They gasp.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

They jeer louder than ever.

ON DAVID'S MOTHER

She races across he field and joins David.

MOTHER

You're over-exerting yourself, David, and I want you to stop. Now! I mean it! That bird isn't going to fly. Not today, maybe never. You've done all you can, and I'm proud of you, but enough is enough!

Angry and embarrassed, David gets up and pushes her away.

DAVID I can't stop now, Mom. If I do, B. B. will probably never fly again.

David is puffing and nearly exhausted. His mother tries to contain her own anger.

MOTHER All right. I'll give you one more chance. If I see you can't continue, I'll take you right home. And you'll see Doctor Owen. Understand? She stalks away and a hush comes over the crowd. TV cameraman Ted Nelson follows her move with his camera. Then he returns to Linda Gomez, and they resume her commentary.

> GOMEZ (on camera) Moments ago, I spoke to the boy's mother, and yes, he is lame. But that's all she would say at present.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

There is determination in David's eyes as he gazes at B. B. He scoops him up, and places him in his palm.

DAVID

This time, my Friend, you're going to fly right up to the sky, because a bird in my hand is worth ten who won't try.

B. B. Robin and Max exchange surprised looks. David himself looks surprised, and he bends close to B. B. in his hand.

DAVID

Hey, B. B. you've got me speaking in rhyme, too!

CLOSE ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

Their faces are almost touching. In David's hand, B. B. now seems emboldened. He gives David a peck on the cheek.

B. B. ROBIN Okay, I'm ready for takeoff, ready to try it, to fly it, to sky it, to do or to die it!

David hops and hobbles as fast as his lame leg will allow. Gradually, he builds up more speed while holding B. B. high his hand, as though the bird were a kite that had to be coaxed into the sky.

ON SPECTATORS

They are quieter than ever as they wait breathlessly to see what will happen next.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

Over the hush of other spectators, Clorinda's friends hiss and hoot and jeer.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

With B. B. bouncing in his hand, David keeps circling the field resolutely. But nothing happens.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

They continue their sneering and sniggering.

FIRST CAT You're a phony, B. B. Robin!

SECOND CAT Yeah, a phony baloney!

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

Over and over and over, David zig-zags, criss-crosses, and circles the field. And in his hand B. B. flips and flops. It looks as if this could go on forever.

Suddenly, it happens. B. B. Robin begins lifting off from David's hand, his wings flapping unsteadily. But there is no doubt about it. He is taking off. Soon he is soaring into the sky.

ON SPECTATORS

They begin cheering wildly.

ON GOMEZ

GOMEZ (on camera) Ladies and gentlemen, that question I asked earlier has been answered. After months on the ground, the robin that was too fat to fly anywhere is now in full flight. And what a beautiful sight it is. Truly a miraculous flight. See the miracle for yourself. ON CAMERAMAN TED NELSON

He turns his camera, tilts it up and begins photogaphing B. B. in flight.

ON B. B. ROBIN IN FLIGHT

He is soaring and soaring.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

People watching the event on TV are cheering and clapping.

ON CLORINDA

She is groaning, gnashing her teeth, and putting one paw over her eyes and the other over her ears to block out the unwelcome sights and sounds. Suddenly, she screams..

> CLORINDA It's an outrageous fake! A lie! A hoax! Foul play! Flim-flam! Skulduggery!

ON EMPLOYEES WATCHING TV

One of the men glances in the direction of Clorinda's cage. He taps the shoulder of another man.

MAN Go quiet that cat, the ornery one in the cage over there. And be careful. She's mighty quick with her claws.

The other man heads for the snarling Clorinda.

ON CLORINDA

She screams bloody murder as the man approaches.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY - ON B. B. ROBIN IN SKY

Gaining more and more confidence, B. B. Robin sails above the cheering crowd, and swoops above the heads of Clorinda's cronies. CLORINDA'S CRONIES - B. B. ROBIN'S POV

Like a dive bomber, B. B. zooms close to the cats's heads, and zips back into the sky.

ON FIRST CAT

She scowls, pats her head, wipes something off, and examines her paw with a look of disgust. She searches the sky, spots B. B., shakes her paw at him ,and shoots a murderous look.

ON THE OTHER CATS

All are wiping their heads and shaking paws at B. B. Robin.

ON B. B. ROBIN

As he swoops down again, the cats cower and cover their heads with their paws. B. B. laughs, and with the corner of one wing, thumbs his beak at them.

ON DAVID - B. B. ROBIN'S POV

David is grinning from ear to ear.

DAVID Right on target, B. B.

Max scoots over to the cats and laughs. They hiss at him, but his angry growl scares them into sneering silence.

ON B. B. ROBIN IN THE SKY

He begins performing a variety of acrobatics, zipping, zooming, looping, flipping, spinning, and gliding over cheering spectators.

ON SPECTATORS CHEERING

ON TWO BETTING MEN

The man who had bet B. B. Robin wouldn't fly turns to the man behind him and hands him a ten-dollar bill.

LOSER (laughing) Here's your money. For a guy who's not a betting man, it's your lucky day. LOSER (cont'd) To tell the truth, it was worth a sawbuck just to see that bird fly again.

ON DAVID

He watches B. B.'s stunts, laughs, and calls out to B. B.

DAVID Now you're showing off.

David's mother joins him and gives him a big hug.

MOTHER It's a miracle, son. Forgive me for not sharing your faith in that bird. I'm so proud of you.

ON B. B. ROBIN

He dips and dives over David's head as spectators cheer again. Soon, he is hovering by David's ear.

CLOSE ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

B. Robin's beak is almost in David's ear. David's eyes widen in delight, and he cocks his ear and listens.B. B. is warbling up a storm.

Max barks happily, and David's mother laughs.

DAVID He's singing, Mom! B. B. is singing again!

B. B. Robin is WARBLING loudly, lustily, and proudly.

MOTHER It's another miracle, son.

David hugs his mother.

DAVID Oh, Mom, this is the happiest day of my life. If only Dad could be here. His mother embraces him warmly.

ON B. B. ROBIN

B. B. sails into the sky as David, his mother, and Max watch.

MOTHER He'll be leaving us, son. That's in the nature of things.

David is suddenly melancholy.

DAVID And I'll be lonely and just as lame as ever.

Sensing the boy's gloom, Max snuggles next to him with a consoling whimper.

ON B. B. ROBIN

He is performing more aerial gymnastics.

ON DAVID

Watching B. B. perform lifts David's spirits. As B. B. swoops over his head, David begins hopping joyfully. B. B. Robin again flits close to David's ear.

B. B. ROBIN Take some advice from a former Blimp. If I can fly, you can walk without a limp.

DAVID It's no use. Getting rid of a limp is not like losing extra pounds. They're two different things. So forget it.

B. B. ROBIN You'll just have to try and try and try. Just look at me, I'm right back in the sky.

In a reversal of roles, B. B. Robin begins to coax, cajole, goad, and exhort David.

B. B. ROBIN Of what I've done, you've seen a sample, Now it's your turn to follow my example.

With his beak, B. B. tugs on David's collar, Willy-nilly, David hobbles snd stumbles along in the direction B. B. is pulling him. David's mother looks on with alarm and the spectators with astonishment.

> FIRST SPECTATOR (to his neighbor) Is that bird attacking the boy? Hell, the kid's got a bad leg.

SECOND SPECTATOR Hard to say. Kind of unusual, though, don't you think?

FIRST SPECTATOR Yeah, like that Hitchcock movie about the birds attacking people.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

They are as astonished by the sight as everyone else.

FIRST CAT Looks like the bird is turning on that rotten kid. (guffawing loudly) I wouldn't miss this for anything.

SECOND CAT Shhh. Not so loud. You want that lousy bird to come back and unload more of his stink bombs on us?

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

B. B. finally lets go of David's collar and flies slightly above him. David keeps hobbling, stumbling, and struggling forward. Then B. B. begins pecking and prodding him.

> B. B. ROBIN Just look at what I have achieved, because it was you, my Friend, who I believed.

B. B. continues to peck and prod relentlessly as David stumbles, falls, rises, and falls again.

ON DAVID'S MOTHER

David's mother screams after his last tumble, and races toward him.

ON GOMEZ

GOMEZ (on camera) In a day of miracles, again something totally unexpected is happening here. The robin appears to be attacking the boy who helped him. But you'll have to see for yourself.

ON CAMERAMAN NELSON

He turns his camera and zooms in on David and B. B. Robin.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

B. B. is still prodding and pecking David.

GOMEZ (V. 0.) The robin continues to pull and peck the helpless boy, who, as I reported earlier, is disabled with a lame leg. It's an unusual turn of events, possibly fraught with danger. I'm sure that's why the boy's mother has run out to him.

ON DAVID, HIS MOTHER, AND B. B. ROBIN

She reaches David and races along with him trying to pull him away from B. B. Robin

DAVID'S MOTHER Make him stop, David! He'll hurt you. What's the matter with him, anyway?

But B. B. Robin keeps prodding away. Gradually, after all the slips and falls, the spills and tumbles, David's bad leg begins to move more smoothly, more rhythmically, B. B. finally lets go and hovers over David's head.

Soon, David's legs are moving in perfect coordination. Gone is the jerkiness, the hitch and hobble that had become habitual for months.

ON DAVID

He is walking in a delirious daze as Max leaps up and down.

DAVID My limp is gone! I can walk again!

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

As David regains the normal use of his bad leg, B. B. performs a few happy arabesques above him.

ON DAVID'S MOTHER

She gazes at David in wonder, then at B. B. almost with disbelief. Soon she begins sobbing.

MOTHER Another miracle. My prayers have been answered.

ON B. B. ROBIN

He swoops close to David.

B. B. ROBIN I knew it! I knew it! I knew you could do it!

B. B. begins warbling triumphantly.

ON SPECTATORS

They fill the park with loud cheers.

ON CLORINDA'S CRONIES

FIRST CAT This show is rigged!

SECOND CAT Boooo! The bird's a ringer. Throw the bum out!

ON DAVID AND MAX

Hearing the cats' heckling, David signals to Max.

DAVID Max, we've had just about enough of those mangy cats. They don't seem to learn, so it's time we taught them a lesson. Go get 'em!

ON MAX AND CATS

Max is Gung Ho for the assignment. He makes a beeline for the cats, and is soon scattering them screaming in all directions as spectators cheer.

ON THE SKY

B. B. continues to perform aerial stunts.

ON GOMEZ

GOMEZ (on camera) A grounded bird flies again. And sings again. And a lame boy finally walks again. What a miracle morning this has been.

ON DAVID, HIS MOTHER, B. B. ROBIN, AND MAX

B. B. Robin alights on the shoulder of David's mother. He gives her a peck on the cheek, and she returns the compliment. Then he pecks Max, and the dog licks him back

Now B. B. perches on David's shoulder.

B. B. ROBIN Since your walk is so good, let's have more fun. Let's see if you can also run.

B. B. zooms ahead, and urges David to follow. David accepts the challenge and begins running, slowly and tentatively at first, then faster and faster as though he had never been lame.

ON DAVID'S MOTHER

She watches with tears of joy streaming down her cheeks.

MOTHER Thank you, B. B. Robin. You're a rare bird, indeed.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

David does much more than respond to B. B.'s challenge to run. As B. B. performs his acrobatics above, David engages in some creative turns of his own.

He leaps over park benches, executes a few cartwheels, and leapfrogs over Max, who is dizzy trying to match the antics of both boy and bird.

CLOSE ON JACK IN THE CROWD

As spectators go wild, caught up in the excitement is Jack, the wise-guy student who earlier in the school playground had teased David about his lameness.

> JACK Way to go, kid! You sure got guts.

ON THE DISTANT HORIZON

While the boy and bird ballet continues, some small specks appear on the horizon.

ON B. B. ROBIN

He suddenly perks up, gazes toward the horizon, and starts flapping his wings deliriously.

ON THE NEAR DISTANT SKY

The specks in the sky are now a flock of robins, among them B. B.'s parents and friends returning from their winter sojourn down South.

ON DAVID AND B. B.

B. B. swoops down and perches on David's shoulder. So much joy in one day is almost too much for the young robin.

B. B. ROBIN Look! My parents and friends in the sky. I can hardly wait for them to see me fly. B. B. ROBIN (cont'd) And to hear me sing a beautiful tune, and to see I'm no longer a big balloon.

CLOSE ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

Boy and bird gaze at each other, probing the love and understanding they discern in each other's eyes.

B. B.flaps his wings, then kisses David's cheek.

B. B. ROBIN I'll never, ever forget you, Friend, but I'll be back, this isn't the end.

So you can look forward to some great hobnobbin' with your old student, B. B. Robin.

ON THE SKY

The flock of robins is getting closer.

ON DAVID AND B. B. ROBIN

Anxiously, B. B. glances up in the direction of the approaching robins

B. B. ROBIN Now I must take my leave for a spell, until we meet again, it's so long and farewell.

B. B. prepares to take off. David begins speaking in verse.

DAVID Remember, when it comes to food, and you're not wise, there's a tendency to grow in size.

So, if it looks fattening, don't even try it, or else you'll be back on some miserable diet.

B. B. ROBIN To guarantee my self-preservation, I truly plan to resist temptation, B. B. ROBIN (cont'd) Now that I've won the battle of the bulge, I promise never to over-indulge.

Thanks to your wonderful assistance, I have learned the importance of patience and persistence.

DAVID

I can walk again, thanks to your big assist, Now I don't have to see that psychiatrist.

B. B. ROBIN It was you who pulled me out of the snow, so what I did for you was quid pro quo.

Thanks to you, I no longer wobble, And thanks to me, you no longer hobble.

DAVID Before you fly away, here's a final word. From now on, the initials B. B. will mean Beautiful Bird.

Max barks his approval.

B. B. ROBIN When I come back, we'll have great times, when the two of us will exchange many more rhymes.

B. B. gives David's cheek a final peck, flaps his wings, and zooms into the sky. Soon, he is soaring toward the oncoming flock of robins.

CLOSE ON B. B.'S PARENTS IN THE SKY

MOTHER ROBIN Look! Our son! I've missed him so much! And he's flying again. Oh, how wonderful. FATHER ROBIN The boy has survived, and that proves he has courage and stamina. He looks much slimmer, too. Let's have a closer look.

They peel off from the flock and zoom toward their son.

CLOSE ON B. B. ROBIN

As his parents approach, B. B. can barely contain his joy.

ON THE SKY

Another miracle is taking place in the sky, the joyous reunion of family and friends with one whose survival had seemed questionable at best when they flew South months before.

ON B. B. ROBIN AND PARENTS

They are reunited with delirious flapping and warbling. As other robins look on with equal joy, B. B. Robin warbles to beat the band.

In the midst of his joy, B. B. Robin again glances down and waves to David and Max.

ON DAVID AND MAX

David looks up and waves his arms vigorously as Max leaps all over the place.

ON B. B. ROBIN IN THE SKY

He dives toward David and Max, executes a few loops, flaps his wings for one final goodbye, then zooms back into he sky to rejoin his parents.

ON DAVID AND MAX -- BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

While B. B. Robin and his parents are frolicking above, David and Max are ecstatically romping and rollicking over the landscape.

Soon, David's mother gets into the spirit of things and joins in all the high jinks.

NARRATOR (V. O.) Like B. B. Robin and his family celebrating and rejoicing in the sky on this miraculous day, it is obvious that on the ground, boy, mother, and dog are flying pretty high, too.

ON DAVID, HIS MOTHER, AND MAX

The three are having a whale of a time as they continue their romping and rollicking.

FADE OUT

THE END

I