

AN ABANDONED MINE, A GOLDEN CHALICE AND A BEAST NAMED BLONDIE

Written by

Knock, Knock. Who's there?

FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL TOWN - STREET - DAY

A bright summer day.

DEXTER, 11, wiry, rides his bike -- a whirl of arms and legs.

Behind him, a marshmallow struggles to keep up. Well, not a marshmallow. Rather, PUFFY, male, 11. He wears a thick winter coat, white, down-filled and a football helmet.

Dexter's bike wobbles, his chain dangles. He pulls to a stop.

Puffy and Dexter dismount, look at the chain.

PUFFY

That could be dangerous.

DEXTER

Most people aren't scared of everything, like you.

PUFFY

I'm not scared of things.

Dexter pokes Puffy in the arm. POP. He pokes again. POP.

DEXTER

Literally wrapped in bubble wrap.
For a bike ride.

PUFFY

Fine. I'm scared of one thing.

DEXTER

And why did you walk backward everywhere last week?

PUFFY

I thought somebody was following me. Point is, you need a new bike.

DEXTER

Yeah, sure. Right after I buy my Lamborghini.

BARTON (O.S.)

You help me. I help you.

Dexter and Puffy spin to see: OLD MAN BARTON, 82, bent and wrinkled, rocking on his front porch.

They step back, pulling their bikes with them. Dexter whispers...

DEXTER

They say he went crazy working the mines.

The old man holds up a hundred dollar bill.

Dexter raises an eyebrow, interested. He looks at Puffy who shakes his head vigorously.

INT. BARTON'S KITCHEN - DAY

Barton points to a map on the table.

BARTON

All ya' gotta do is go through the abandoned mine. Pop up here. Grab the golden chalice. Bring it back.

Barton tears the hundred dollar bill in half. He gives one half to Dexter, pockets the other.

Puffy hides behind Dexter.

PUFFY

What's a golden chalice?

BARTON

You drink out of it. It's gold. This is basic stuff.

Barton waves him off, hands a small box to Dexter.

BARTON

Don't open this until you need it.

Puffy takes the box from Dexter.

BARTON

Trust me. You'll know when.

DEXTER

What is it?

Barton leans in close, his tone deathly serious...

BARTON

It's a magical item with special powers, bestowed upon me by my --

PUFFY (O.S.)
-- It's a whistle.

Barton and Dexter turn to Puffy, who holds the open box.

PUFFY
What?

INT. SEWER SYSTEM - DAY

Dexter and Puffy stand at the bottom of a ladder. Barton looms at an opening above them.

BARTON
Remember, the chalice.

Barton slides the manhole cover over the opening, leaving Dexter and Puffy alone in the dark. Dexter calls to him...

DEXTER
This isn't a mine. Sir? Sir!

Puffy takes the whistle, blows, hard. No sound. Nothing.

PUFFY
Magic whistle. Right. Can we just go home? I'd like to nap on my magic pillow.

Using a flashlight, Dexter looks at the map.

DEXTER
It's not that far.

He starts out. Puffy reluctantly follows.

PUFFY
Disease. Broken glass. Rusty metal.

Two little eyes shine in the light of Puffy's flashlight.

PUFFY
Rat!

He practically climbs Dexter, whose leg twists from the weight, they fall together in the muck and grime.

The rat MEOWS. Dexter shines a light on it.

DEXTER
It's just a cat, you doofus.

Dexter checks his ankle. He picks himself up, limps on.

INT. SEWER SYSTEM - DAY

Dexter and Puffy share a ladder. They peer from under the grate, scan a typical suburban backyard.

They see: a mug. Gold. Sitting on a table near a house.

They also see: a dog. Large. Dangerous. Sleeping under the table. A nearby sign over a doghouse shows his name: Blondie.

PUFFY

Yeah -- no.

DEXTER

I can't run. My ankle.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

The dog wakes. Sees the boys peeking from the grate. Attacks.

INT. SEWER SYSTEM - DAY

The boys panic, drop the grate, scramble down the ladder. They watch as the dog nips at the gate, barking, growling.

DEXTER

Give me the whistle.

Puffy does. Dexter blows. Hard.

The dog YELPS. Retreats immediately.

Dexter smiles, looks at Puffy, who drops his head.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Puffy stands next to the open grate, whistle in his mouth.

He steps. Once. Looks around nervously.

Another step.

The dog peeks from behind the doghouse. Puffy's eyes go big.

The dog sprints at him.

Puffy blows the whistle. The dog YELPS, retreats.

Puffy keeps blowing. His cheeks full and red as he runs, grabs the mug.

The dog makes another charge, Puffy blows hard.

Again, the dog retreats.

Puffy sprints for the sewer. He looks back. The dog starts for him again. Puffy blows. Hard. Too hard. The whistle shoots from his mouth, across the yard.

The race is on. But, Puffy's too slow. The dog jumps him.

INT. SEWER SYSTEM - DAY

Dexter watches as the dog bites at Puffy.

POP. POP. POP. Every bite brings more bursts of bubblewrap.

Puffy rolls for the opening. When he's close enough, Dexter pulls him in and drops the grate, leaving the dog to once again, gnaw at the bars.

INT. BARTON'S KITCHEN - DAY

Old Man Barton watches as Puffy, his now-filthy coat hanging off him in shreds, pulls out the mug, sets it on the table.

Dexter sets his half of the hundred dollar bill next to it.

BARTON

Didn't think you boys had it in
ya'.

He slaps his half of the bill on the table, takes the mug, sets it on a shelf next to countless others.

BARTON

Had my brother set it out.
(to Puffy)
I've been watching you. Thought you
needed an adventure. And, since I
needed company...

He pulls out a new map and another hundred dollar bill.

BARTON

What are you boys doing next week?
I hear there's another golden
chalice deep in the forbidden
mountains.

FADE OUT.