Land for a Lie

By Andrew Lightfoot
EXT. DARCHOLLIA’S TOWN HALL—DAY

A yellowed and ruffled slab of paper is nailed to the front wooden doors of a glorious town hall.

Under the hot squelching sun stand three interested farmers. Each reads the contents of the paper with a glimmer in their eye.

RUSTCHY (42), a greying man with piercing green eyes breaks the cold tense silence.

RUSTCHY
I cannot begin to imagine what I would do with one hundred more acres of land.

The man in the middle GRYLITH (48), an overweight and bald man snorts with laughter.

GRYLITH
You best be holding onto to that imaginary thought of yours Rustchy because it will never come true. This land will be mine.

RUSTCHY
Really, and what makes you think this?

GRYLITH
I have seen all of the stocks last year. All fell short in both quantity and quality compared to my own.

The third man STEVANT (25), a young ladies man with shoulder length brown hair breaks his silence.

STEVANT
I believe the fat in your body has finally reached your brain.

Grylith turns around and glowers at Stevant.
GRYLITH
And what would a boy such as you know about stocks Stevant? You are too fresh from the womb in farmer years to even get the slightest idea of how the business works!

STEVANT
Yes I’m a young farmer but if knowledge took up space I might almost be as big as you are.

Stevant’s sharp remark dumbfounds Grylith. His eyes bulge out with anger. His sausage-like fingers roll into his hand to form a fist.

Stevant’s smug smile only adds to the fury building up inside Grylith.

RUSTCHY
Grylith is right, you are too young. It is the main reason why that farm of your father’s is being run into the ground these days.

The smile of Stevant’s face vanished. He leans around Grylith.

STEVANT
What would you know about farming? You are rarely out in your field.

RUSTCHY
My time is taken up with other things.

STEVANT
(laughing)
Like that hobby of yours, what was it, stone carving?

GRYLITH
Why the hell would a farmer carve stones?
RUSTRCHY
Business.

Grylith and Stevant fall to their knees in crippling laughter.

The door to the town hall cracks open. Out walks a tall slender man MAYOR DUHARE (55). He gives a friendly smile when he sees the farmers.

MAYOR DUHARE
Good afternoon gentlemen.

Rustchy nods in response.

GRYLITH/STEVANT
(Together)
Afternoon Mayor Duhare.

Mayor Duhare looks at the paper then back to the farmers with an amused grin.

MAYOR DUHARE
Three of Darchollia’s finest farmers contesting for one piece of land I see.

GRYLITH
I think we all know who will be getting that land. After all I’m richer than these two.

Grylith sticks his chin up and chest out proudly. Mayor Duhare chuckles.

MAYOR DUHARE
Maybe so Grylith but you do not have it yet, this season may change things.
(BEAT)
Best of luck to you all this season.

Mayor Duhare strides past the farmers. He reaches the street, stops, and turns around.
MAYOR DUHARE
Oh and I almost forgot! There is a gentleman from out of town taking an interest to the land so I would not be so confident Grylith.

GRYLITH
Why should I be concerned about some outsider?

MAYOR DUHARE
Because I know for a fact that he can afford the land already.

EXT. GRYLITH’S FARM-DAY

The tip tops of plant life are just barely breaking the surface of the large field.

A dirt pathway runs along one side of it. The earth flattened out by many years of use.

A shirtless Grylith sits on a tree stump on the side of the path. He looks longingly at a bag held in his hands.

With tongue clamped between his teeth he pulls out an old olive green wine bottle.

He cackles to himself in delight.

GRYLITH
Let’s see how that boy can grow his crops without a yak!

Suddenly two girls turn down his path.

Grylith quickly places the bottle back in the bag

His attention now turning towards the girls, he leans back on a fencepost.

GRYLITH
Good evening ladies.

The girls look up to see the hideous site of Grylith smiling. Stomach hanging over his waist band.
They remain quiet, their pace quickens. Grylith watches them walk past.

GRYLITH
Don’t you know a man when you see one?

EXT. STEVANT’S FARM-DAY

Five girls all practically lean over a fence outlining Stevant’s large field. His crops are not yet showing.

In the field a strong yak pulls an odd looking plough. On it stands a muscle flexing Stevant.

The girls ooh and awe with every movement from him.

GIRL
Stevant, will you be at the dance tonight?

STEVANT
No, I have to work to do.

GIRL #2
Please come to the dance.

Stevant puts on a sad face.

STEVANT
I’d would love to dance with Goddesses like you girls and I’m afraid if I start I will never want to stop but I have to work. Lots still needs to be done.

Disappointed by the answer the girls wave their goodbyes.

Stevant climbs higher up on his plough and with a charming smile blows a kiss to them all.

The ploughs jerks as it catches a rough patch of ground sending Stevant flipping over it. The girls rush to help him.
INT. RUSTCHY’S BARN—DAY

Rose-red light from the sundown creeps in through the open doorway of the barn.

In a corner sits a dusty plough. The early stages of cob webs begin to show.

Seated on an old short stool is Rustchy. His eyes look over a large rock on the table before him. A hammer and chisel lay by it.

He picks up a piece of white chalk and writes the words “Love Stone” on it. Face scrunches as he thinks the appearance of the stone over.

A boy, JIKE (6), curiously enters the barn and pulls a seat up beside Rustchy.

RUSTCHY
What do you think about this one
Jike?

Jike tilts his head both ways.

JIKE
I think it’s gross.

RUSTCHY
(chuckling)
That’s good then.
(BEAT)
What does your mother think of the other one?

JIKE
She says good crash-men’s-ship.

RUSTCHY
You mean craftsmanship?

JIKE
That is what I said.

Rustchy grins as he picks up the hammer and chisel. Carefully he begins chiseling where the chalk is. Jike mimics his movements.
JIKE
Why are you doing this now?

The chiseling stops.

RUSTCHY
I cannot grow crops anymore Jike.

JIKE
Why not?

Rustchy places both hammer and chisel down with a sigh.

RUSTCHY
The seeds, they just grow a little bit then die.
(Point outside towards the field)
Now I just have a large area of good for nothing land.

JIKE
Why don’t you get seeds from Grylith? He has good ones.

Rustchy gives off a quick smile.

RUSTCHY
If I did that then I would be the laughing stock of this whole town. I would never go to another farmer for such things.

JIKE
Oh.

A mouse scurries across the barn floor. Jike jumps of his seat to catch it.

RUSTCHY
How did you get in here anyway?

JIKE
The stone said I was welcome.

Jike finally manages to pin the mouse against the floor. He picks it up and places it in his pocket.
JIKE
Maybe you can make Grylith a stone and ask for seeds back?

Rustchy perks up. A smirk appears on his face.

RUSTCHY
You gave me an idea but I’ll need your help with it tomorrow.

EXT. PATHWAY-DAY

Jike runs down the dirt pathway as fast as he can.

Held in his shirt are a bunch of coins. The big pouch sways as he runs.

Some coins bounce over the sides and fall to the road. Jike keeps on running.

EXT. GRYLITH’S FARM-DAY

Grylith is walking around his field inspecting his plants.

He turns when he hears the patter of feet. Jike is running parallel to the field.

GRYLITH
Hey boy!

Jike stops, panting. Grylith walks over to the fence curiously looking at the pouch.

GRYLITH
Where are you off to in such a hurry?

JIKE
Home.

GRYLITH
What you have in there?

Grylith peeks over the edge of the shirt and sees the large collection of coins. His curiosity increases.
GRYLITH
Where did you find all this?

Jike points a finger down the road.

JIKE
From the pond over there. I think it is a magical one!

Grylith snorts with laughter and turns back towards his field.

JIKE
All you need is seeds and follow the instructions on a rock.

GRYLITH
Sounds like nonsense.

JIKE
It is not nonsense, look.

Jike dips a hand into the pouch and pulls out a handful of the coins.

Grylith, still with his back turned, listens to the sounds of the coins clanging around. Jike gives up.

JIKE
Alright but you will never know till you try it.

EXT. STEVANT’S FARM-DAY

Jike now walks down the pathway, whistling a tune with a smile on his face.

He places two handfuls of coins into his pant pockets then let’s go of his shirt, nothing more but dirt falls out.

Up ahead is Stevant flirting with a girl. She dances on her tippy toes with excitement.

Down by Stevant’s feet rests a brick sized brown box. Jike eyes this up.
STEVANT
You are truly the most beautiful girl
I have ever laid eyes on.

The girl blushes and breaks eye contact with Stevant.

GIRL
No I’m not. You are just saying that.

Thoroughly disgusted, Jike approaches the box on the ground. No one has noticed him yet.

With speed he slips his hand into the box and pulls out a small china doll dressed in a stainless white dress.

Trying his best to stifle his laughter he retrieves the mouse from his pocket and puts it in the box.

STEVANT
No seriously you are.

Jike tosses the doll in the grass and wipes of his hand as if the girlish toy dirtied it.

STEVANT
I got you something and I think you will like it.

Stevant looks down to find Jike holding the box in his hands, a curiously wide smile on his face.

For a moment Stevant looks at him. Jike responds quickly.

JIKE
You would leave a present for her lying on the ground?

STEVANT
Right, thanks
(Giving the box to the girl)
Here you are.

The girl, in silent glee, accepts the box with a smile.

STEVANT
Hope you like it.
The girl hurriedly opens up the box. Eyes flash wide and mouth gapes open as she lets out a terrified scream.

The box drops to the ground as the girl takes off down the road. Stevant is confused.

STEVANT
What?

Jike hunches over in laughter. Stevant walks over to the box and takes a look inside it.

As soon as he does a small fury nose pokes out. Stevant yells and drops the box once again to the ground. Jike’s laughing multiplies as he falls to the ground.

STEVANT
Where’s the doll!?

Jike immediately stops laughing as soon as he sees Stevant’s fury. He storms over to Jike and lifts him by his neck collar.

STEVANT
Where is it!?

Jike quickly points over to a fence post. Stevant drops him and walks over to it.

STEVANT
Can’t believe you would do something like...

Stevant freezes in disbelief and stares down at the fence post. Slowly he kneels down and picks up sharp fragments of what once was the china doll.

He spins around to face Jike in a new wave of anger

JIKE
I will buy another one!

Stevant approaches Jike.

STEVANT
How? They’re expensive and you’re only a kid!
Jike digs in his pockets for the coins he had placed in there. Suddenly a smirk appears on his face.

JIKE
Have you heard about the pond?

EXT. POND—NIGHT

Grylith stands before the stone looking at it with little interest. A handful of strings that lead down to small bagfuls of seeds are held firmly in one hand.

A rope tied to a mule burdened with items is held in the other. The olive green wine bottle is amongst them.

With a grunt he lets the bags fall to the ground. He looks over the pond area curiously.

EXT. BUSHES—NIGHT

On the other side of the pond sits Rustchy. He watches Grylith from the cover of the bushes. Nearby him sits a bag of coins.

He waits patiently.

Suddenly a voice calls out.

STEVANT (O.S)
Please don’t tell me you ride that poor animal.

EXT. POND—NIGHT

From out of the darkness walks Stevant. Grylith turns around.

GRYLITH
What are you doing here? Pretty boy!

STEVANT
Same reason you are here
(BEAT)
Jike told me.

Grylith grumbles to himself in anger. He picks up one of the bags of seeds.
STEVANT
How many bags have you brought?

Grylith doesn’t answer. Instead he looks out over the pond. Stevant takes a look at the bags below and laughs.

GRYLITH
What!?

STEVANT
You didn’t bring very many bags.

GRYLITH
So?

STEVANT
How much gold do you expect to get back?

Stevant walks back into the darkness and comes out with many bags of seeds in his arms.

STEVANT
That’s why I brought lots.

Grylith watches as Stevant places all of his bags on the ground. Stevant smiles to Grylith.

STEVANT
What do we have to do?

GRYLITH
The rock said to just toss them over the pond. Think you can throw that far?

STEVANT
(sarcastic)
Not sure. But the world is full of miracles such as you being able to read so I have faith.

Simultaneously both Stevant and Grylith hurl a bag of seeds over the pond.
EXT. BUSHES—NIGHT

Rustchy remains in the bushes as he watches both bags fly towards him.

The first one lands close by, the other one catches him in the stomach. He hunches over in pain.

With difficulty he picks up the bag full of coins and tosses it over the pond. He grabs the other bags and runs.

EXT. POND—NIGHT

The bag of coins sails across the pond and lands in front Grylith and Stevant. Both are stunned.

Slowly they look down to the bag, everything is silent.

STEVANT

Nothing else?

GRYLITH

Must only work for one bag.

Their eyes snap to each other as if knowing what the other is planning.

Suddenly both of them jump at it. They smack and hit each other all over as they desperately try and get the bag.

With a heavy push Grylith sends Stevant flying into the darkness. He turns to the bag with a smile.

GRYLITH

Shouldn’t fight me pretty boy.

He picks up the bag and weighs it in his hand. He chuckles to himself happily.

Stevant comes out of the darkness, rock in hand. Grylith stands up not noticing Stevant.

With a swift toss the rock is sent flying into the back of Grylith’s head. Grylith stumbles forward and collapses into the pond.
Stevant now panicked, runs over to the bag and takes it then dashes off.

He reaches the mule when something catches his eyes. The olive green wine bottle! He looks at it, over to Grylith’s body floating in the pond, then back again to the wine bottle.

Quickly he unties it and continues away from the pond.

**EXT. RUSTCHY’S FARM—DAY**

Rustchy is handsomely dressed in a black suit. He walks down the pathway. Behind him his crops grow healthy and strong.

PRIEST (V.O)
...and so we say a final goodbye to our dear friend Grylith Oparre. May he rest in peace.

**EXT. CEMETARY—DAY**

A group of people stand around a wooden cross. The words “Grylith Oparre” etches into it. A mound of fresh dirt marks where the body lies.

Standing amongst the crowd is Stevant, Rustchy, Mayor Duhar, and Jike. All of them except Jike have a cup in their hands.

PRIEST
So with this wine given to us by Stevant we will drink to the memories of our dear friend.

Suddenly the mouse jumps out of Jike’s pocket and scurries off into the crowd. Jike follows it and soon finds the wine bottle sitting by the priest’s feet. He eyes it up.

PRIEST
(raising his cup)
To Grylith.
CROWD
To Grylith.

Everyone raises their cups to their mouths. Jike raises the bottle to his.

THE END